

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 1, Father and Son

Hogg's eyes were moist. His body trembled from excitement as he carefully looked at this familiar-feeling youth.

He looked at those eyebrows...those two eyes...that nose...

At the same time, he compared them to the memories he had of the young Linley.

"Linley, it really...really is you?" Hogg's voice was hoarse, and his eyes were red.

"It's me, Father. It really is me!" Linley impatiently wanted to prove himself. "Father, do you remember how, back when we were in our ancestral hall, you asked me to pay my respects to the ancestors of our clan? Do you still remember how you tested me for the Dragonblood in my veins? And...I told you that I had three good friends at the Institute. Two of them are here!"

Linley immediately pointed towards the nearby Yale. "Look. That's Yale, of the Dawson Conglomerate. And there; that's George of the Yulan Empire!"

"And me!" Bebe flew out as well, staring at Hogg. "Uncle Hogg, remember me? I'm that little Shadowmouse." As he spoke, Bebe's body flickered as he transformed into a little black mouse, hopping onto Linley's shoulders while still speaking in the human tongue. "It was Boss who raised me!"

Hogg repeatedly nodded.

"Father, look, the Coiling Dragon ring! You know about it, right?" Linley stretched out his ring.

Hogg, hearing this, began to weep from joy. "Right. Right!" He couldn't help but stretch his arms out, taking Linley into his embrace. He clapped his hands against Linley's back repeatedly. "Haha, it really is you. Linley. This is wonderful. Haha. This really is wonderful." Hogg was so excited that he was stammering.

He had died, then been transformed into an undead. He had spent two thousand-plus years as an undead, then suddenly regained his memories and been brought here.

And then, his son had suddenly appeared in front of him.

How could he not be excited? Not be happy?

"Father, come. Let's go inside. Let's go inside and chat." Linley wiped his tears dry, then immediately took his father by the hand and led him flying towards the rear courtyard of the Abyssal Inn.

To be able to see his father was a sort of joy which surpassed the joy and excitement Linley had felt upon finding out that he had become a Soul Mutate. Linley felt like he had returned to his youth, when he learned from his father regarding culture and more. Whenever he didn't do well, he would be hit on the palm. Back then, he felt it was quite painful, but thinking back to it now gave him a warm feeling.

The death of his father had caused Linley to sink into an abyss of darkness. He was willing to give up everything for revenge.

But now...

Everything was better!

Within the room.

A group of people were seated around two tables, while Hogg was still feeling completely mystified. He hurriedly asked Linley, “Linley, what is going on here? Before, I was a Saint-level Black Knight. How did I suddenly regain my memory and be brought here, then see you?”

Hogg had never heard of an undead regaining its memories.

“The Boss asked the Sovereign to do it.” Bebe chortled.

“Haha.” The nearby Dixie sighed, then said, “Uncle Hogg, in the past two thousand years, Linley has gone beyond just being a genius student at the Ernst Institute. He is an expert who stands at the very peak of the Netherworld, the Infernal Realm, and the other Higher Realms. It was he who asked the Sovereign to restore all of our memories and send for people to find us, then bring us here. Myself, Yale, and George; we were all brought back by Seven Star Specter level experts.

“He asked the Sovereign to find us, and even arrange for people to bring us?”

Hogg couldn’t help but look at his son, who stood before him. In the Yulan continent, Hogg knew that his son had potential, but Hogg only believed that Linley would one day become a powerful magus, or perhaps even bring back their family’s ancestral heirloom. But...ask a Sovereign for favors? Hogg felt his head spin, just thinking about it.

“Linley, how are you...” Hogg didn’t even know what to ask.

Ask about his son’s level of power? What his son had been doing these years?

“Boss is a Highgod Paragon.” Bebe said proudly. The nearby Yale and the others, over the past few years, had learned this as well.

“What’s a Paragon?” Hogg asked.

Bebe was startled.

Previously, Yale and Bebe’s parents were also unaware of what being a ‘Paragon’ meant. Only after hearing an explanation did they understand. Bebe’s mother, that violet-robed woman, said with a laugh, “Hogg, being a Highgod Paragon means...amongst Deities, your son is an unmatched individual! Even Sovereigns would warmly invite him to become an Emissary for them.”

“Amongst Deities...he’s unmatched?” Hogg blinked several times, staring at Linley in astonishment.

Hogg had the sense that everything that had happened today – seeing Linley, hearing all these things – was all a dream.

Hogg’s reaction was what everyone had thought it would be. When Yale and George had asked about Linley’s abilities, after they were given clear answers, they had also been stunned for a long time. Everyone knew exactly how many Deities there were in the Netherworld and Infernal Realm. They were counted in the trillions.

There were countless Deities in the countless planes. How terrifyingly powerful must one be, to stand at the very top of this pyramid?

Hogg had experienced two thousand years of life in the Undead Realm, and his mental fortitude was now much greater than before. He quickly recovered, then his eyes lit up and he asked hurriedly, "Linley, your mother's death. It was that Duke Patterson of the Kingdom of Fenlai...were you able to get vengeance?"

"He died. I personally killed him." Linley said solemnly.

"And the person behind him? Did you find out who it was?" Hogg said frantically.

Hogg had found out that behind Duke Patterson, there was yet another figure controlling things from behind the scenes. However, he was attacked and pursued by Patterson's forces before he was able to figure out who that person was, and then Hogg had died.

"I did. Behind him was the King of Fenlai, 'Clayde'." Linley nodded. "Afterwards, in the city of Hess, I killed Clayde!"

"It was King Clayde?" Hogg was stunned.

"Although I killed Clayde, this matter still wasn't finished. Mother had been offered by Clayde to the Radiant Church. It was the Radiant Church which killed my mother, then offered Mother's soul to the Chief Sovereign of Light." Linley's voice was very low. Linley still harbored tremendous hatred for the Radiant Church. It could be said that Doehring Cowart also died due to the Radiant Church.

Hogg, hearing this, frowned. A baleful aura gathered on his face, and he said in a low voice, "The Radiant Church?"

"Afterwards, I eradicated the Radiant Church, pulling them out by the roots." Linley continued.

Hogg glanced at his son, startled. In the Yulan continent, the Radiant Church had been an enormous entity. Still Hogg knew that, logically, given that his son was now at the peak of power, it made sense that in the past, he would be capable of eradicating the Radiant Church.

"Everything has been resolved!" Hogg let out a long sigh, then shook his head and laughed self-mockingly. "I was too stubborn. It has been two thousand years, but I still haven't been able to forget these matters. Still, what's the point of thinking of them? Lina died long ago."

"Father. Mother didn't truly die." Linley said.

"Eh?" Hogg's eyes instantly lit up, and he appeared full of energy as he stared towards Linley with hope in his eyes.

Linley nodded solemnly. "Father, when Mother was killed, her soul was offered to the Chief Sovereign of Light. She should currently be one of the Angels of the Divine Light Plane! Only, those who have been transformed into Angels are absolutely loyal to the Sovereigns of Light...to help Mother acquire her freedom and have her be with us again will be very hard."

"You...even you cannot accomplish it?" Hogg asked hurriedly.

Currently, as Hogg saw it, given that his son was one of the most powerful of Deities, and that even Sovereigns would fight over having Linley be an Emissary for them, his son's status should be enough for an Angel to be restored to her free will. Hogg felt that this shouldn't be hard.

"I have no confidence in being able to do so." Linley shook his head.

The nearby Bebe said, a sour look on his face, "The Chief Sovereign of Death said that even if she personally went to speak to the Chief Sovereign of Light about this, it still would be unlikely. For even the

Chief Sovereign of Death to be unable to accomplish this...the chances of Boss going and succeeding are most likely very, very low." Bebe didn't have any confidence in Linley either.

Linley himself felt rather guilty over this!

"Haha, forget it." Hogg let out a long sigh, then laughed, "Linley, we should thank the heavens that the two of us, father and son, are able to meet again. To reunite with your mother as well? That's just a vain hope. Don't worry about it. That's just looking for trouble."

"Father..." Linley looked at his father, astonished.

From the final letter his father had left before his death, Linley understood how deep his father's love for his mother was. His father was willing to die for her; why was he now willing to give up so easily?

"Forget about it. How can everything in the world truly be perfect and as we desire?" Hogg said with a soft laugh.

That very day, Hogg, Linley, Yale, George, and the others began to energetically discuss the various matters that had happened to their homeland, the Yulan continent. Afterwards, Hogg began to discuss his life as an undead, while Linley discussed his experiences over the past three thousand years. Hogg now truly understood how long a journey Linley had embarked on. He felt worried each time he listened to Linley narrate one of his dangerous experiences, but at the same time, a feeling of pride swelled within his chest.

In front of the Abyssal Inn. Linley's group was preparing to depart.

"Wait a moment. I'll come over in a bit." Linley said to his father and friends, then walked to the pool which was in the center of the grassy area close to the Abyssal Inn. Next to the pool, there was a beautiful, red-haired maiden who was fishing happily. Others didn't know who the red-haired maiden truly was, but Linley knew.

She liked to personally witness one expert of the Netherworld after another come here in search the Abyssal Fruit, then die. The Chief Sovereign of Death.

Putting aside her fishing rod, the red-haired maiden turned to glance at Linley. "What, you are leaving?"

Linley could notice the spatial distortions nearby; the Chief Sovereign of Death had created a spatial barrier, preventing others from listening in and preventing their words from leaking out. Linley sighed inwardly at the terrifying strength of the Chief Sovereign of Death, then replied, "Yes, Sovereign. The six people I was waiting to receive have already arrived. Thank you, Sovereign, for the pains you have taken over during this period of time."

The red-haired maiden smiled slightly, revealing pearly, pristine white teeth. "The first time I saw you, you were just a little fellow who had just barely reached the level of a commander. In the blink of an eye, you've become a Paragon."

"Sovereign, there is one last thing I would like to ask you to help me with." Linley hesitated slightly, then spoke out.

"You really are troublesome. Speak." Over the past few years, Linley often met the Chief Sovereign of Death around the Abyssal Inn, and so their relationship had improved significantly.

"Sovereign, I wish to find a Seven Star Specter named 'Odin'. I don't know if you have any method by which you can accomplish this?" Linley asked expectantly. During this recent time period, Yale had always wanted to go find Odin, but unfortunately, the Netherworld was endlessly vast. Although Linley was powerful, looking for Odin was like searching for a needle in the sea.

“Find a Seven Star Specter? Odin?” The red-haired maiden frowned slightly. She couldn’t help but give out a faint snort. “Do you really think that I’m bored and have nothing better to do? I have no idea what sort of spiritual aura this ‘Odin’ of yours has. All you give me is a name; how am I supposed to find him? Unless, of course, he was once undead. Only then can I use the Netherworld Heart to look for him. Otherwise, there is no way.”

Linley could only laugh awkwardly.

It was indeed hard to find someone with just a name. It was precisely because it was hard that Linley had come to bother the Chief Sovereign of Death about this. Linley thought that the Netherworld Heart would be able to find him, but from the sound of it, only those who had once become undead could be found through the Netherworld Heart.

“To find a single person shouldn’t be too hard, given your current status.” The red-haired maiden laughed softly. “Just find a Specter Castle and issue a mission. Say that you want to find a Seven Star Specter named Odin. The missions that you, Linley, issue? I imagine there will be some commanders and Lord Prefects who would fight over the chance.”

Perhaps few ordinary Highgods would have heard of Linley, but amongst the commanders and Lord Prefects, within a thousand years, most likely all of them would have learned of his name.

The red-haired maiden then turned her head and went back to her fishing. “Enough. You can leave now!”

“Thank you, Sovereign.” Linley bowed slightly, then turned and left.

“Let’s go. Let’s go to the Sacred Undead Mountain!” Linley smiled towards his father and his friends, then released an enormous metallic lifeform. It hovered there in midair, and then this group of experts boarded it. With a flash, the metallic lifeform transformed into a speck of light, disappearing into the horizon.

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The metallic lifeform advanced at high speed, and within it, laughter rang out uninterrupted.

“Boss Yale, don’t worry. Third Bro gave you his word. Odin is definitely going to die.” George snickered nearby. Yale’s hatred towards Odin had sunk into Yale’s very soul. Unless and until he truly killed Odin, Yale would forever feel a thorn in his heart.

Yale nodded, then chuckled towards Linley. “Sorry to trouble you, Third Bro.”

“From the Abyssal Mountain to the Sacred Undead Mountain will take quite some time.” Linley said with a laugh. “On the way over, I’ll use my divine sense to search, and also control the metallic lifeform to fly by some important areas. Perhaps on our journey, I will find Odin.”

Linley’s spiritual power was more powerful than even when using Sovereign’s Might.

The spatial bindings controlling the Netherworld were far weaker than those which controlled the Planar Battlefield. In the Netherworld, through using his divine sense, Linley was able to reach to a distance of eight million kilometers! The metallic lifeform which Linley controlled could roughly fly roughly ten million kilometers each day. At this speed, Linley only had to search once a day.

Searching personally, and issuing a mission; these were two methods.

If searching failed, then he would issue a mission. Given Linley’s prestige and power, finding Odin wouldn’t be hard!

“If we find him on the journey, that would be wonderful.” Yale said with a smile.

Linley, seeing Yale like this, couldn’t help but sigh mentally. In the past, Yale had always been dissolute, free, and easy. But now, Linley realized how great a mental pressure Yale felt. Hatred had gnawed away at Yale’s soul, and although Yale wanted to relax and be dissolute once more, he wasn’t able to.

Under Linley’s control, the metallic lifeform flew at high speed. In three years time, it reached the borders of Northbone Prefecture.

“After this prefecture, we will be very close to the Sacred Undead Mountain.” George chortled.

Bebe mumbled, “Northbone Prefecture is the northernmost prefecture of the Netherworld. We still haven’t found Odin. It seems that Boss is going to have to go to the Specter Castle to issue a mission...hmph. We’ll just let Odin live a bit longer.”

Linley saw that Yale’s face was rather ugly right now.

“The impact of Odin’s actions on Yale truly are severe.” Linley sighed to himself.

Linley could completely understand. If, when Linley was a Saint, a Highgod were to control him to kill his wife, kill his son, kill his brothers, kill his friends...then torture him to death? Most likely, Linley would also go insane with the need for revenge! He would rather die than not get revenge.

Linley patted Yale on the shoulders. “Don’t worry. He won’t be able to escape.”

“Right.” Yale squeezed out a smile. “It’s fine. I can wait. At least I have a chance for revenge now.”

The Netherworld. Northbone Prefecture. The grasslands outside the city of Hide.

There were many soldiers stationed here, and quite a few castles. The number one expert of Northbone Prefecture here was Sayant, a Sovereign’s Emissary and the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture. Sayant had quite a few experts under his command, one of whom was the Seven Star Specter, Odin.

A black-robed blur descended from the skies.

“Milord!” The soldiers immediately bowed.

“Mm.” The black-robed man nodded calmly, then strode inside.

Moments later, the black-robed figure saw Sayant.

“Lord Prefect, the matter is dealt with.” The black-robed figure said respectfully to Sayant. Sayant was dressed in a white robe, and was reclining against a chair, holding a book and leisurely flipping through it. Hearing the report from the black-robed figure, he smiled and nodded. “Mm. Very well. Right, Odin. Have you heard any news regarding the Planar Wars while traveling outside? Nearly a century should have passed since this Planar War.”

Sayant himself didn’t participate in the Planar Wars. Given how far away Northbone Prefecture was, news came here at a much slower rate.

“Your subordinate ran into a few people, most of whom were fairly average in strength. I didn’t run into a single Lord Prefect or Tartarus Lord level expert. I didn’t hear any news regarding the Planar Wars; or, perhaps the news simply takes too long to arrive here. Still, on this trip, your subordinate did find out something else.”

“What news have you?” Sayant raised his head, glancing at Odin curiously.

The black-robed Odin revealed a hint of a smile. “Lord Prefect. The news has been made public from the Abyssal Mountain that a fourth person has acquired the Abyssal Fruit! According to my investigations, the name of the person is Bailey.”

“Bailey? It seems Linley failed.” Sayant laughed as well.

“The Abyssal Mountain is incredibly dangerous.” Odin laughed smugly. “Bailey succeeded, so I imagine that Linley must have died within the Abyssal Mountain. Even if he didn’t die, given it has been a thousand years, he has probably left the Netherworld by now.”

“If Linley knew what was good for him and so retreated, he might still be alive. But from what I saw, he definitely wouldn’t easily give up his goal of meeting the Sovereign. Nine out of ten, he died there on the Abyssal Mountain.” Sayant laughed calmly. “Enough. Odin, you should now be completely at ease.”

Indeed, Linley was Odin’s nightmare.

“I feel much more relieved. I won’t disturb you any further, Lord Prefect.” Odin bowed slightly, then departed.

In the air above Northbone Prefecture.

Just like before, Linley was using his divine sense to search while chatting casually. “We are about to reach the place where the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture, Sayant, lives. Sayant was the one who told me to

go to the Abyssal Mountain. To be honest, I need to go thank him for his role in my current accomplishments. Eh?” Linley’s face suddenly changed.

“What is it, Boss?” The nearby Bebe said, puzzled.

“Third Bro, did you find Odin?” Yale immediately asked. Whenever he saw any changes on Linley’s face while Linley was searching, Yale would suspect that it was Odin. But prior to this, every single time Yale had made this guess, he was wrong.

Linley looked towards Yale. He couldn’t help but laugh loudly. “Odin. It’s Odin! Haha, Odin has finally revealed himself, and he’s right there with Sayant...” A hint of a cold light flashed through Linley’s eyes. “It seems that Sayant and his wife intentionally deceived to me back then.”

Linley was no fool. Upon discovering Odin, he realized that Sayant had lied and was able to guess a few other things.

“Odin is right at Sayant’s place?” Bebe understood as well, and he said furiously, “Boss, I told you that Sayant and his wife seemed a bit strange when they spoke with us. They told you go to the Abyssal Mountain, most likely with the intention of letting you die there.”

“You still need to thank them.” George laughed. “Third Bro, because of them, you had this extraordinary run of luck, allowing you to break through to become a Paragon. If Odin and them were to know, they would regret it endlessly.”

Linley hadn’t yet publicized the fact that he was a Soul Mutate, as when too many people knew a secret, it would easily slip out. He only said that he was a Paragon.

“Right. I really do need to thank them.” Linley swept his gaze towards the northeast, then growled, “Let’s go. Let’s go pay a visit to Sayant and Odin!”

“Odin!” Yale ground his teeth, his eyes sharp.

Instantly, Linley controlled his metallic lifeform to fly forward at top speed.

The Seven Star Specters under the control of the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture all had their own castles.

Odin was currently on the balcony of his castle, leisurely enjoying the sunlight and staring at the vast grasslands.

“Hrm?” Odin raised an eyebrow. There was a metallic lifeform flying over at high speed. The metallic lifeform flew so quickly that Odin was astonished. “Such speed. This metallic lifeform must be a top-tier one. The person who is controlling it must be a supreme expert as well.”

“ODIN!”

The growling voice instantly echoed throughout the region in an area of ten thousand kilometers. Many soldiers of Northbone Prefecture, as well as Sayant himself, were startled by it.

“Who is it?” Odin’s face changed slightly.

Within Odin’s field of vision, the metallic castle disappeared, revealing a group of people, with Linley at the lead.

“Linley!” Odin’s face changed from terror. “How...how is Linley still alive? Even if he is alive, why did he come back?”

“Swoosh!” The group of figures flew down from the skies.

“Who goes there!” A furious shout rang out. Instantly, the soldiers all rose into the skies, and over a hundred prefectural soldiers moved to block Linley’s group.

“Beat it.” Linley growled.

An invisible ripple spread out, and instantly this group of soldiers were impacted by it and sent flying back. Fortunately, Linley showed mercy, as otherwise, all of these soldiers would have died instantly.

Linley’s group acted as though they were moving into an unpopulated region as they flew downwards, ignoring everyone else. All the soldiers who wanted to block them were sent flying back.

“This...what is this ability?” Odin was stunned.

It was easy to kill Highgods, but the technique Linley had used was truly astonishing.

Linley’s group hovered there in midair, staring coldly at Odin.

“Odin. Do you recognize me?” A furious, hateful, teeth-grinding voice rang out. Yale stared death at Odin.

Odin turned to look, and upon seeing Yale, laughed coldly. “Haha, and here I was, wondering who it was. So it is the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate. I didn’t imagine that after becoming an undead, you would then become a Deity. This really was outside my expectations. For you to be able to meet again with your brother after becoming a Deity; how rare!”

Odin didn’t seem to be afraid at all.

“Linley.” A gentle voice rang out.

Linley turned to look. From afar, five figures were flying over at high speed, with the leader being the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture, Sayant, along with his wife, Anita. By their sides were three other subordinates, who were most likely experts at the Seven Star Specter level.

“Sayant.” Linley greeted him.

“Linley, you should’ve let me know that you were coming. I would’ve gone to welcome you.” Sayant said with a laugh. As he spoke, Sayant’s group of five flew next to Odin, while Linley didn’t move to block him at all.

The two sides stared at each other there in midair, with many prefectural soldiers watching.

Most likely, once Sayant gave the order, these prefectural soldiers would all charge en masse.

“Let you know in advance?” Linley let out a calm laugh. “Sayant, I imagine that if I let you know, you would’ve had Odin hide...haha, I really didn’t expect that you, Sayant, a noble Lord Prefect, would play this sort of trick on me. This is a bit too laughable.”

Sayant’s face sank.

Linley’s words made him feel very uncomfortable!

“Hmph. He’s just an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan.” Sayant snickered mentally. “Prior to this, I was worried that Linley was a Paragon, but since he didn’t acquire the Abyssal Fruit at the Abyssal Mountain, he’s definitely not a Paragon.” Sayant had only been worried about Linley’s level of strength due to the intelligence reports he had received from the eight great clans.

But the results of Linley's trip to the Abyssal Mountain had put Sayant at ease.

Indeed...if Linley had already been a Paragon, acquiring the Abyssal Fruit would have been very easy.

"Sayant, stand aside. This has nothing to do with you." Linley said calmly. "My target is just a single person. Him. Odin." Linley stared at Odin.

Odin looked at Sayant.

Sayant chuckled as he looked at Linley. "Linley, I've been fairly courteous to you. Why must you act so brazenly? Odin is my subordinate. If I were to allow you to kill him just because you asked me to, then how would I, Sayant, be able to hold onto my position as Lord Prefect? Since he is my subordinate, I definitely won't permit you to take him away. Linley...if you are wise, you will leave immediately. Otherwise, if we shed all pretense of cordiality, it won't be good."

Sayant was completely confident in himself.

"Sayant." Bebe began to curse furiously. "Last time, you intentionally lied to us to have us go to the Abyssal Mountain. We haven't even settled accounts with you about that; we are already giving you face. You are simply a Lord Prefect; who do you think you are, to put on airs in front of me and my Boss? Are you qualified to act like this?" After having experienced the Planar Wars, Bebe held Sayant in no regard at all.

Bebe was completely confident in being able to kill Sayant.

"Impudent!" Sayant's face turned ugly, and he let out a growl.

Suddenly, a long black spear appeared in Sayant's hands, and a terrifying aura spread forth from the spear. The nearby Odin, seeing this, laughed.

"Swoosh!" Sayant charged straight towards Bebe. Clearly, Bebe's words had infuriated him.

The strange thing was...

Linley's body didn't move, but a blurred figure had appeared in front of Sayant.

"Bang!" A kick landed directly across Sayant's chest. Sayant was like a sandbag, and was knocked back downwards. "Boom!" He smashed into the corner of the castle, and then landed on the ground. At this moment, Linley's 'body' slowly disappeared, while that blurred figure reformed into Linley's true body.

Odin, the other Seven Star Fiends, Lady Anita, and the watching prefectural soldiers were all stunned.

"Ugh." Sayant spat out a mouthful of blood. He lay there on the ground, staring at Linley in terror.

What sort of speed was this?

Linley stood there in midair, staring down at the prone Sayant. Calmly, he said, "Be a good boy and stand over there. If you continue to act so arrogantly, I will show no more mercy." After speaking, Linley turned to stare at Odin, his gaze cold.

Odin's face turned ashen, and his body began to tremble.

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Power

Odin lowered his head, staring in terror at Sayant, who lay stricken on the ground. He sent mentally, “Lord Prefect, Lord Prefect!” Odin was now truly frantic. Having seen Linley’s displayed power, Odin now knew...there was no way he could resist at all. In his desperation, all he could do was place his hopes on Lord Prefect Sayant.

“Shut your mouth!” Sayant snarled angrily through divine sense.

Sayant’s eyes were red, and his heart was filled with rage. He had been kicked to the ground with so many soldiers watching. This was an insult! For someone of Sayant’s status to suffer this sort of humiliation was something that had to be avenged. But he didn’t have the ability to do so at all!

The surrounding soldiers all stared at Linley, stunned, then at Sayant, who lay there on the ground, covered in blood.

“To attempt to gain revenge will only result in one thing. Death. I have to endure it. Endure it!” Sayant felt all the more humiliated with so many people staring at him. “If I die, then everything is finished. Linley probably really is a Paragon. Even if others hear of this story, it’s not embarrassing for me to have lost by his hand.” This was how Sayant consoled himself.

He, Sayant, worried about his face. Odin, however, was worried about his puny little life.

“If I don’t run now, I’ll have no hope.” With a ‘whoosh’, Odin dove underground, wanting to hide himself underground and flee.

“Hmph.”

Linley smiled calmly, and then his body transformed into a blur as he moved to stand below Odin.

“Whap!” Linley delivered a slap directly to Odin’s face, knocking him flying into the air. Odin slammed into the side of the castle wall like a sandbag. With a low, thudding sound, the castle wall split apart. “How terrifyingly fast.” Odin had yet to recover from his terror, but Linley was already once more in front of him.

Odin looked at Linley, his face filled with terror.

Linley just reached out calmly while sending out 108 surges of earthen yellow energy which formed into a cocoon, completely binding Odin within it. The terrifying compressive power made it so that Odin wasn’t able to move at all.

Even Hemmers, an expert whose material attack power was comparable to Paragons, was dramatically impacted by this technique of Linley’s.

How could a mere Seven Star Specter possibly have the power to resist against the oppressive power of Linley’s Will?

He was paralyzed!

“Yale, you choose how he dies.” Linley turned to look at Yale, who flew over, his eyes filled with savagery.

“Ahhhhhhhh!” Odin howled, frantically trying to break free from the oppressive power binding him.

It must be understood that even when Linley had just become a Highgod, his Gravitational Space was already capable of making it hard for ordinary Seven Star Fiends to resist. Now that it was infused with the power of his Will, it was increased more than a hundredfold in strength. Odin was like a trapped beast in a cage; although he howled with savagery, he wasn't able to extricate himself at all.

“You want to kill me? Haha...kid, you think you are worthy of killing me?” Odin's eyes were scarlet red as he stared at Yale, contempt in his gaze.

“Linley, if you are so tough, kill me yourself!” Odin howled.

By now, Odin realized that there was no hope.

Sayant, Anita, their subordinates, and the soldiers all quietly watched from far away as Odin struggled like a trapped beast. Earlier, they wanted to intervene, wanted to attack and drive Linley back, but after Linley made his move, they no longer had any thoughts of fighting back.

“Kill you myself?” Linley laughed calmly. “In your dreams.”

“Hmph.” Odin suddenly laughed coldly, and a translucent ripple shot out from Odin's eyes, shooting towards Yale.

“Crunch.” The earthen yellow cocoon which surrounded Odin spat out a translucent sword-shaped ripple which destroyed this soul attack. Linley gave Odin a disdainful, calm look. “Odin, now that you are trapped within my Gravitational Prison, you aren't able to fight back at all. Don't try to be tricky.”

“Make your move.” Linley looked at Yale.

Yale nodded slightly, a deep azure spear appearing in his hands.

“My brothers. My wife. My children. My parents...” Yale's body was trembling, and his lips were white as he stared at Odin. And then, Yale suddenly bent backwards like a greatbow being pulled, then savagely exploded forth, throwing the spear in his hand forward with endless power and sending it piercing towards Odin.

Swooosh...

“Clank!” The deep azure spear pierced towards Odin, but it wasn't even able to break through his skin.

Yale was stunned.

“Ha...haha...” Odin raised his head, laughing loudly, laughing wildly. “Linley, oh, Linley. You want your friend to kill me? Haha. He's a Demigod! I'm a Seven Star Specter, a Highgod! My energy defense alone is comparable that of a Highgod artifact. His bit of attack power isn't even capable of breaking through my skin. Haha, kill me? In his dreams!!!”

Yale's face turned pale.

“I...I...” Yale's body trembled. “I want to get revenge, but I...”

Linley had already captured Odin and gave him to Yale for Yale to kill, but Yale's attack power was simply too low; Odin was, after all, a Seven Star Specter. Even if he didn't use his fused profound mysteries in activating his divine power, his material defense was still close to a Highgod artifact in strength. In terms of soul defense, Odin, who trained in the Edicts of Death, was even mightier. Yale wasn't able to harm him at all.”

Odin glared savagely at Yale, as though he wanted to eat him alive. “Punk, you want to kill me? In your dreams! The power you possess isn’t enough to even harm a single hair on my body!”

“Odin.” Linley gave him a calm glance.

“Linley, what are you being so arrogant about?” Knowing that he was about to die, Odin actually became fearless, and he stared at Linley, laughing loudly. “Didn’t you want your brother to kill me? Unfortunately, he’s too weak. Even though you captured me and gave me to him for him to kill, he still isn’t able to do it. It is fated that he will never be able to personally take revenge! Haha...I still remember the look on the faces of Yale’s family members when they all died. How delightful!”

“Bastard!” Yale bellowed.

“You aren’t able to kill me. There’s no way you’ll be able to personally take revenge.” Odin laughed delighted.

A layer of frost appeared on Linley’s face.

“Absorb this into your body, then activate it.” With a flip of his hand, Linley produced a drop of black liquid, which floated towards Yale.

“Huh?” Odin’s face changed.

“Aren’t you very powerful? You are only an ordinary Seven Star Specter, and one who trains in the Edicts of Death. I want to see if your body is tough enough to withstand a strike which uses Sovereign power!” Linley laughed calmly.

Yale’s eyes lit up.

“Third Bro, thank you.” Yale immediately absorbed the drop of Sovereign’s Might into his body, and then, with a ‘bang’ sound, black light exploded forth from Yale’s body as a terrifying aura spread out from it. Yale held that deep azure spear, which swirled with black light. Yale let out a deep growl...

“DIE!”

Yale struck out as fast as lightning, stabbing wildly with that deep azure spear towards Odin.

“NO!!!!” Odin only had enough time for one final, miserable scream.

Yale didn’t stab directly into Odin’s head; he wildly, randomly stabbed, leaving more than ten bloody holes throughout Odin’s body before finally piercing through his head!

“Huff, huff...” Yale panted wildly as he launched several more stabbing blows, then began to tremble.

Odin just lay there limply, not responding all. His divine artifacts fell out of his body, but because of the repulsive force, they remained next to him.

“Dead. Odin’s dead. I personally killed him.” Yale raised his head, laughing wildly, but his tears flowed downwards. Yale seemed to be gripped by madness.

But seeing this, Linley only let out a sigh of relief.

Yale was releasing the hatred that had been pent up deep within his heart. Afterwards, he would be much better.

A long while later, Yale finally regained his former calm. He turned his head to look towards Linley. A grateful look; that was it. Linley laughed, then walked over and patted him on the shoulders. "Let's go." They were brothers who had played together since they were youths. Some words simply didn't need to be said.

George and the others felt happy for Yale as well.

And then, Linley's group of experts boarded their metallic lifeform and left.

As for Sayant, the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture, he and his men all looked at each other, letting out mental sighs of relief.

"Lord Prefect, this Linley is too, too powerful." A nearby azure-robed man said in a low voice. "Odin was a Seven Star Specter, but he was trapped by Linley to the point of not being able to fight back. What sort of technique is this? Also, Linley's speed is utterly inconceivable."

Given how fast they were, when ordinary commanders encountered Paragons, they weren't able to fight back at all.

"Given how fast he was, and how he could use energy to trap a Seven Star Specter...while only using ordinary divine earth power..." Sayant's face was solemn. "This Linley most likely truly is a Paragon."

The people by his side were all stunned.

Paragon?

"Let's go. All of you, go back!" Sayant's face was sinister, and his voice was dark.

"Whoooooosh." A wild wind howled, and the wind slashed across the land like knives.

Ironknife Gorge. Within the castle.

Within the wide, empty area, there were two giant teleportation arrays. Suddenly, one of them flashed with countless sparkles of light, and the surrounding Bloodridge soldiers couldn't help but to turn their heads to look.

The light dissipated, and a group of people merged.

One of the Bloodridge soldiers recognized them, and his eyes lit up. He hurriedly bowed. "Greetings again, milord." Last time, when Linley had used this teleportation array to depart, this soldier had clearly seen Linley and knew that Linley had the Bloodridge Sovereign's medallion.

"Mm." Linley nodded slightly. "We will wait here momentarily. We will leave in a bit."

"Please feel free, milord." The Bloodridge soldier smiled.

Linley's group waited there in the air above the vast, empty area. Bebe mumbled, "Boss, it should be fairly fast for you to arrive from the Yulan continent. Why haven't you arrived yet? It's been a thousand years since I've seen Ninny, and Nana..." Bebe missed his wife and daughter.

"We are almost here." Linley said with a laugh. "It takes a bit of time for us to all fly from the Yulan continent to the Arctic Icecap..."

"Linley, little Wharton is coming as well, right?" Hogg was rather nervous and excited.

"Yes, Father." Linley laughed and nodded.

His father hadn't seen Wharton in a very long time. Wharton had been sent off to the O'Brien Empire very early on, and when his father had died, the last mental impression he had of Wharton was most likely the toddler Wharton. Linley said with a laugh, "Father, I imagine once you see Wharton, you won't be able to recognize him right away."

"I will definitely be able to recognize him." Hogg was completely certain.

"Oh, we just entered the teleportation array. We are coming." Linley said. His divine fire clone was coming alongside this large group of people.

Immediately, everyone turned to look at the teleportation array, only to see it once more flash with countless specks of light. Moments later, the light finally, completely vanished. A large group of people was gathered there, with the leader being Linley's divine fire clone and Delia. The divine fire clone flew towards Linley, merging into him.

Upon merging in, the five souls intermixed.

Instantly...

Linley's four mutated souls began to send surges of spiritual energy towards the divine fire clone's soul, which slowly began to change. After all, the five souls were one to begin with.

"Father." Wade, Taylor, and Sasha all ran towards Linley.

"FATHER!!!!" Wharton stood there, staring at Hogg, stunned.

Hogg stared at this burly, muscular youth in front of him. Wharton had a hint of Hogg in his face, and was fairly similar in appearance to Linley as well. But more importantly...when Hogg looked into Wharton's eyes, it was as though he was looking back into the big eyes of toddler Wharton. "Wharton?" Hogg said softly.

"It's me, Father." Wharton ran forward, tightly embracing Hogg.

"Wonderful. Wonderful." Hogg couldn't keep his eyes from turning red.

After a long while, the two, father and son, separated.

"Father, look. This is your grandson, Wade. This is Taylor. This is your granddaughter, Sasha..." Linley walked forward, laughing as he made the introductions.

Wharton hurriedly made some introductions of his own. "Father, this is your grandson, Cena...and him. Arnold, quick, come over here. This is your great-grandfather. Father, this chubby-faced fellow is Arnold's son." Many people had come on this trip. Everyone who had reached the Saint-rank had come, leaving behind only a few people.

"Wonderful. Wonderful." Hogg nodded repeatedly. All he could do was repeatedly smile.

"Alright, Father, let's head to the Skyrite Mountains first." Linley laughed.

This giant group of people immediately boarded the metallic lifeform and flew out from Ironknife Gorge.

Those Bloodridge soldiers all stared there, stupefied. They glanced at each other.

"Important people really are different! In one breath, he brought an entire family of more than a hundred people to the Infernal Realm. Grandfathers, grandchildren...there really were quite a few people."

“Right, Captain. Why did you address that brown-haired man as ‘milord’. Who is he?”

“You don’t know this, but last time, when I was on duty, that brown-haired man came bearing the medallion of the Sovereign, using it to activate the teleportation portal for free! Even most Emissaries don’t possess that medallion. Only a person with a certain status will be able to acquire a treasure like that.” The Bloodridge soldiers, bored, chattered amongst themselves.

As for Linley’s family, they all made haste towards the Skyrite Mountains.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 4, The Clan's Changes

The Bloodridge Continent. Indigo Prefecture. The Skyrise Mountains.

The Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, Gislason, was seated in his estate's living room. Gislason was currently accompanying a skinny bald elder. They were chatting and laughing.

"Gislason, why be modest? Haha, back when we were in the Chaotic Sea, when you, me, and those several other fellows took on that Fiend mission to go kill that Valentine [Wa'lun'ding]. Me and the others, we were just there to serve as props. It was you, Gislason, who released your might and unleashed that innate divine ability of your Azure Dragon clan, as well as that supremely powerful material attack to slay Valentine in one blow. That memory has always stayed with me." The bald elder said with a laugh.

"Haha, Bagleaf [Bai'ge'lei'fu], that was so many years ago." Gislason said modestly, but his face was still covered with a smile.

"Yes, it was long ago. Still, you were so incredible all those years ago; I imagine that by now, Gislason, your strength is so great that I am no match for it." The bald elder's words clearly contained flattery within them.

However, flattery depended on the speaker.

If an ordinary Highgod were to say such things, Gislason would be annoyed just listening to it. But the current speaker was a supreme expert whose power was no less than Gislason's, and one of Gislason's older friends. Flattery from a person like this naturally made Gislason feel quite happy.

"Haha, don't say that." Gislason grinned widely.

The bald elder, Bagleaf, said with a sigh, "This time, I've come to visit you, old friend, partially because I want to visit that Paragon your Azure Dragon clan produced. It seems my luck is quite poor."

Gislason, hearing this, immediately laughed. "Bagleaf, the Planar Wars concluded just a century ago. Linley probably hasn't returned from the Netherworld yet. Don't worry. After Linley returns, when you come visit, I will definitely introduce you to Linley. Linley...although he is a true genius of our Azure Dragon clan, he is quite a decent fellow and likes to make friends." As he spoke, Gislason let out a sigh of approval.

The bald elder stood up, then laughed. "Fine, then I'll wait for next time. I've disturbed you for so long...I should return as well. In the future, when I have time, I'll definitely seek you out and we can reminisce together."

"You are always welcome." Gislason stood up as well, then escorted the bald elder away.

"No need to escort me away." The bald elder smiled and nodded. Gislason stood there at the door to the hall, watching as the bald elder flew away.

Moments later, someone entered from outside. It was Elder Garvey.

"Patriarch, Commander Bagleaf left?" Garvey laughed as he walked in.

"Right." Gislason smiled back.

Garvey couldn't help but laugh. "Patriarch, this seems to be the ninth supreme expert who has come to visit in the past few decades."

Soon after the Planar Wars concluded, commander-level experts began to come to the Four Divine Beasts clan to pay their respects. The person these experts truly wished to see was Linley. Even if they weren't able to meet Linley, however, they still worked to improve their relationships with the four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan. The current Four Divine Beasts clan...now had a different status, in the eyes of these commanders.

"Hmph." Gislason snickered. "Nine of them! These commanders all saw that our Four Divine Beasts clan produced a Paragon, and so all of them came to express their friendliness towards us. But when our Four Divine Beasts clan was in such dire straits and forced to flee and hide by the eight great clans, aside from Mr. Beirut, none of them came to help us!"

"That Bagleaf, just now." Gislason snorted. "In the past, we had a good relationship, when our ancestor was alive. He would often come to visit. But after our clan fell, and when our Four Divine Beasts clan was forced by those eight great clans to the point of annihilation...I didn't see Bagleaf appear. But now, he wants to talk about our past friendship?"

There were few who would come to send coal in the snow, but many who would add flowers to a wreath.

Now that the Four Divine Beasts clan had a Paragon, its status naturally was different.

Paragons represented true supremacy amongst Deities! For example, the eight great clans that had been attacking the Four Divine Beasts clan; although they were powerful, a Highgod Paragon was more than enough to slaughter all of the experts within their clan.

"This is understandable." Garvey laughed. "Only...I still find it unbelievable that Linley has become a Paragon."

Hearing this, Gislason's eyes lit up as well, and he laughed loudly. "You aren't the only one. I find it inconceivable as well! Almost no one in our Four Divine Beasts clan dares to believe this news. When Linley left the clan, he was nothing more than a fairly powerful Seven Star Fiend, close to commander-level. But who would have imagined that a thousand years later, he would become a Paragon? If it hadn't been for the fact that so many people came and said the same thing, and that they were all supreme experts who couldn't possibly be lying, even I probably wouldn't believe it."

"A Paragon." Garvey let out a sigh of amazement.

Ever since the news that Linley was a Paragon had spread, the various commander-level experts began to discuss this amongst themselves, and so quite a few had come to pay their respects to the Four Divine Beasts clan.

This naturally caused the members of the Four Divine Beasts clan to feel as though the status of their clan was rising!

They had given birth to a Paragon! The status of the Four Divine Beasts clan was now far greater than before. Aside from Sovereigns, nobody would dare to offend the Four Divine Beasts clan. As for Sovereigns...how could they possibly lower themselves to go deal against a clan?

"Garvey." Gislason suddenly said.

"Patriarch?" Garvey looked towards him, puzzled.

Gislason said hurriedly, "Have the communications teams been assigned to the borders of the mountains?"

“They have all been assigned.” Garvey laughed. “Patriarch, don’t worry. If Linley returns from the Netherworld, as long as he reaches the borders of these mountains, the news will quickly be communicated to you and the other three clan leaders. All of the arrangements for Linley’s return have been made as well, including the construction of his mansion.”

“Very good.” Gislason laughed and nodded. “Nothing can go amiss! Linley came from the Yulan Plane, and so he never had an extremely strong sense of belonging here in the clan. After those things happened with Forhan and his son...although Linley still treats the clan quite well because of Baruch’s group, we still need to make up for the past!”

“I understand.” Garvey nodded.

As far as Gislason and the Grand Elder were concerned, the current Paragon-level Linley was even more important to them than Beirut!

Beirut was powerful, but he was still an outsider. If the clan were to face a crisis, Beirut might not necessarily intervene.

But Linley was one of their own!

Although in the past, there were some misunderstandings, in the end, he was still a member of the Azure Dragon clan. What needed to be done now...was to remove those misunderstandings in Linley’s heart and let Linley feel a true sense of belonging, here within the Four Divine Beasts clan.

Indigo Prefecture. An enormous dragon-shaped metallic lifeform was flying at high speed in the air above the mountains and forests.

Within the metallic lifeform was a rowdy scene of joy.

“Grandpa!”

“Great Grandpa!”

A group of youths surrounded Hogg, constantly discussing various matters. Hogg looked at his grandchildren, his face wreathed in smiles.

“Big Bro, look at how happily Father has been laughing.” Wharton and Linley were at the edges of the central room of this metallic lifeform. The two brothers were chatting amongst each other.

Linley glanced at his father, who was smiling calmly while accompanying his descendants, then nodded. “In the past, when we were young, our Baruch clan had already sunk to a very low point. In Father’s entire life, aside from Mother and the two of us, the only thing he cared about was the clan! Father cared deeply about the ability of the clan to thrive. Now that more generations have appeared in the clan...of course Father is happy.”

Right at this moment, three people walked over.

“Third Bro!”

Yale, George, and Reynolds walked over. Reynolds had hurried over from the Yulan continent as well.

“Boss Yale, Second Bro, Fourth Bro. Come, sit over here.” Linley laughed as he pointed. Yale and the other two all sat down. Reynolds chortled, glancing outside the window and sighing in praise. “The Infernal Realm, one of the Higher Realms. This is my first time here. Indeed...the density of the elemental aura here is very great. Only, it is filled with constant slaughter.”

From within the metallic lifeform, they were able to see the constant battles going on below.

“That’s what the Infernal Realm is like.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“It is the same in the Undead Realm. Experts live, experts die. Fourth Bro, I’m impressive, aren’t I? I survived in the Undead Realm for so many years.” Yale raised a smug eyebrow.

Seeing the look on Yale’s face, Reynolds, George, and Linley all felt very happy. This was the real Yale. After killing Odin, Yale no longer felt as heartsick as he previously had.

In the entire central room, there were more than a hundred people scattered about, idly chatting.

Seeing this scene, Linley couldn’t help but smile slightly.

Linley enjoyed this happy, content feeling.

“This world...in many cases, it is power which speaks loudest!” Linley looked at the warm scene, and he spoke softly to himself. “I worked hard to train. Only because my power reached a certain level is my father, my friends, and family able to reunite once more. I’m able to bring the entire clan over from the material plane!”

By now, Linley finally had the feeling...

That the bitter efforts he had put into his training over these years had been rewarded.

After flying for a period of time.

“We are about to arrive at the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Bebe was within the main room inside the metallic lifeform, and he spoke out in a clear, laughing voice. “Everyone, make your preparations. Right, Uncle.” Bebe looked at Hogg. “The ancestors of your Baruch clan are there, Uncle. Baruch, Ryan, the others...”

“The ancestors of the Baruch clan...” Hogg stood up, rather excited. He walked to the sides of the windows, staring through the translucent metal ‘windows’ to the outside.

He could already vaguely make out the Skyrite Mountains.

“The ancestors of the clan!”

Taylor, Sasha, and the other members of the clan all began to chatter about this. Ever since they were young, they were always, repeatedly reminded that they were members of the ‘Baruch clan’. They were filled with great veneration towards the legendary figures of the clan, but didn’t actually feel much towards the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“It’s right up ahead.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

The metallic lifeform instantly vanished, while Linley and more than a hundred people hovered there in midair, flying towards the Azure Dragon clan’s location within the Skyrite Mountains.

“What a long carving. I can’t even see the end of it.” The sturdy Arnold sighed in praise.

Linley laughed. “That’s not a carving. That’s Dragon Avenue! It passes through almost a fourth of the Skyrite Mountains and is more than ten thousand kilometers long. It is the primary avenue which the soldiers of the clan guard.”

Linley’s group of more than a hundred flew over. The soldiers below naturally saw it, and the communications personnel, prepared long ago for this eventuality, were overjoyed. “Elder Linley is

returning!” These communications personnel had divine clones stationed elsewhere, and many of them instantly relied on their divine clones to provide this news to various locations within the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“Patriarch, Elder Linley has returned.”

“Oh, Linley returned?” Gislason instantly flew out.

Not just Gislason; the other three clan leaders, along with many other Elders, who had received this news hurried over as well.

Linley and his group of more than a hundred flew over, and as they did, the warriors of the clan all saluted.

“Elder Linley.” The warriors were very respectful.

Linley smiled and nodded, then led his group towards the Dragon Avenue of the Skyrite Mountains. At the same time, he introduced the place to Wharton and the others. “The rules of the clan are fairly strict. You have just arrived. In a bit, I’ll acquire identity badges for you all. Eh?” Linley suddenly frowned, staring into the distant.

“What’s going on?” Bebe glanced at him.

Delia, Nisse, Yale, and the others all looked into the distance. From afar, a large, impressive group of people was flying, with the leader being Gislason, the Black Tortoise Patriarch, and the other two. Behind them was the Grand Elder and other figures.

“Why are all the high level, important members of the clan coming?” Linley was startled. “Even the Vermillion Bird Matriarch is coming. If they flew over from their residences, it should take quite a while. How were they so fast?”

The reaction time of the clan was simply too fast.

As soon as he had arrived, and just as he had reached Dragon Avenue, this large group had arrived as well. Even when Beirut came, only the clan leaders and the Grand Elder would go to welcome him.

“Haha, Linley!” Gislason laughed loudly as he flew over.

“Patriarch.” Although Linley was somewhat confused, he still went to greet him.

Linley swept the group with his gaze. The Black Tortoise Patriarch, Vermillion Bird Matriarch, and others, including even the Grand Elder who held a grudge for him...their faces were all smiles. They seemed so warm and friendly.

“Although we are in Indigo Prefecture, we’ve heard long ago of your exploits in the Planar Battlefield. Haha...our Four Divine Beasts clan has produced a Paragon. This is worth us organizing a banquet, to celebrate this joyous event.” Gislason seemed quite pleased and excited. “The banquet is already prepared. We’ve been waiting for you. Haha, Bebe...and oh, these must be Linley’s friends. Come, all of you! Haha.”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 5, Refusal

Gislason's words were very correct. Indeed, the entire clan rejoiced!

Not just the high level members of the clan; even many of the ordinary clan members located throughout the Skyrite Mountains gathered together in various places, drinking, chatting, and laughing gaily. For the clan to have produced such an expert was something which made even the ordinary clansmen feel proud!

When the four ancestors had been alive, the clan had been in such a flourishing, vigorous state!

After they died, the clan had decayed, to the point of being loudly insulted by the eight great clans at the borders of the Skyrite Mountains. This was a humiliation! This caused the members of the clan, who had experienced those glory days, to feel very lost in their hearts!

Linley's sudden rise to prominence caused these clansmen to once more feel proud and arrogant.

It was a very wild celebration. Even the patrolling soldiers drank wine and celebrated. With a Highgod Paragon in the clan, the patrolling soldiers weren't concerned; no one would dare to come and make trouble for the Four Divine Beasts clan.

Late night. The Violet Moon hung high in the skies.

The Skyrite Mountains. Within a mountain controlled by the Azure Dragon clan. There was a large estate which stretched over an enormous amount of land built here. In terms of size, it was even larger than the residence of the Patriarch's. It seemed quite simple and plain from the distance, but if one took a close look...one would see that even the walls were covered with intricate, minute carvings. Given Linley's vision, he could instantly tell that these carvings were only accomplishable by someone who was at least at the grandmaster level in sculpting.

And right now...

In front of this mansion stood only two figures; Linley and Gislason.

Linley couldn't help but look towards the nearby Gislason. He mused to himself, "The Patriarch truly has prepared quite a few things for me."

"Patriarch, I'm going to live here?" Linley asked.

"Linley." Gislason laughed. "You are now the number one expert of our Four Divine Beasts clan! When people in the outside world discuss the Four Divine Beasts clan, the first person they will think about is you. Your residence has to match your stature. In addition, this place is fairly large, and you have many family and friends. It is enough."

Linley couldn't help but nod.

The size of this estate was similar to the 'Dragonblood Castle' of the Yulan continent. Even a thousand people could fit inside, much less a hundred.

"Then I will accept it." Linley was quite straightforward.

Gislason laughed and nodded. "Tomorrow, you can move your family and friends over here." Wharton and the others were currently staying within the large gorge already. Hogg went to go visit his ancestors in the Baruch clan. To Hogg and Wharton, seeing the ancestors of the clan was what mattered the most.

"No rush." Linley said. "My family members will want to spend some time with the Yulan branch and their ancestors."

"Fair enough." Gislason laughed and nodded. "Linley...look." As he spoke, Gislason produced a little jade bottle in his hands.

This jade bottle had a small opening. It was generally used for keeping items like already-refined Golden Soul Pearls or other small pills.

"This is...?" Linley frowned. "Sovereign's Might?"

"Right. Earth-type Sovereign's Might." Gislason laughed. "Linley, I know that you primarily train in the Laws of the Earth. Thus, it is better for you to use earth-type Sovereign's Might. That is why we prepared this for you! You are the number one expert of our clan; naturally, you have to use the most suitable type of Sovereign's Might."

Although this little jade bottle of Sovereign's Might was far from being comparable to the flask Reisgem had given Linley, it still had to have at least a thousand drops in it.

"Patriarch." Linley didn't accept, instead shaking his head. "This jade bottle has far too much Sovereign's Might. Ever since the four ancestors of our clan perished, our Four Divine Beasts clan lost our source for more Sovereign's Might. Each drop we use is a drop lost forever. It is best if you keep them and let the other Elders of the clan use them."

Linley knew that given his own power, even if he used Destruction-type Sovereign's Might, he had nothing to fear from Paragons, and in Dragonform even held a slight advantage.

"Haha..."

Gislason laughed. "Linley, you are worrying too much. In the past, our clan had to be stingy in using Sovereign's Might, partially because we no longer had a source for it, but partially because we were being put under great pressure by the eight great clans. We used up Sovereign's Might too quickly; each battle represented the loss of a drop of Sovereign's Might, and generally, we would engage in tens of battles before being able to kill an enemy Elder. Because they were being used up too quickly, the clan didn't dare to hand them out freely. After all, at that time, we had no idea what the future would hold for the clan...and so we had to be a bit more thrifty."

"But now, Linley, you are a Paragon. Who would dare come offend our Four Divine Beasts clan?" Gislason's laughter was very happy.

Linley, hearing this, was somewhat persuaded by Gislason.

Indeed, given his level of power, there would be few people who would be so blind as to come irritate his clan. There would no longer be that many situations where the clan would use up much Sovereign's Might.

"Take it, Linley." Gislason urged.

Linley hesitated slightly.

"Let's do this, then!" With a flip of his hand, Linley instantly controlled his divine earth power to draw in earth elemental essence from the surrounding area, which formed into the shape of a little black flask in

Linley's hands. Linley pointed with one finger, and immediately, a stream of black water appeared out of nowhere in Linley's palms, flowing towards the black flask.

This black 'water' was actually Destruction-type Sovereign's Might.

Linley truly had a very large amount of Destruction-type Sovereign's Might.

Moments later, the flask was filled with it. This flask was roughly ten percent of the water flask in volume.

"What are you...?" Gislason stared.

"Patriarch, let's swap this flask of Destruction-type Sovereign's Might of mine, for that flask of earth-type Sovereign's Might of yours. It is indeed true that if I have earth-type Sovereign's Might, I will be more effective." Laughing, Linley offered the little black flask.

If the clan had a tremendous amount of Sovereign's Might, Linley would have accepted it. But the clan didn't actually have that much; most likely, that little flask represented a large fraction of the clan's reserve of Sovereign's Might.

"Linley." Gislason said hurriedly. "This isn't acceptable. You..."

"Take it, or else I won't take yours." Linley shook his head.

Gislason could only laugh helplessly, then nod. "Fine." He accepted the flask of Destruction-type Sovereign's Might, while Linley accepted the flask of earth-type Sovereign's Might. As Linley was concerned, he had a large amount of Destruction-type Sovereign's Might, but given his power, there would be very few cases in which he would have to use it. To trade it for earth-type Sovereign's Might was beneficial for him.

Time flowed onwards, and in the blink of an eye, more than ten years had passed since Linley's return to the clan.

Linley could sense that the attitude of his clansmen, including the clan leaders, had changed. Linley understood...that after having become a Paragon, he had already become the spiritual leader of the entire Four Divine Beasts clan. His position was now akin to what the War God had held in the O'Brien Empire or the High Priest had held in the Yulan Empire.

The estate in which Linley resided had become a holy ground for the clan.

Within the vast, grassy plains of the estate's courtyard, there was a large group of people gathered. Linley, Reynolds, Yale, and George were seated in a circle, drinking wine and chatting idly about various things. But of course...it was Linley's divine water clone that was chatting with them. The other clones, including his original body, were all training.

It was still Linley's original body that trained the fastest, after all.

"Elder Linley." A gate guard ran over and bowed.

"Hm?" Linley looked at him.

"Elder Linley, the Patriarch has sent word that a Lord Prefect from the Jadefloat Continent wishes to meet you, Elder." The guard bowed as he spoke.

Linley laughed and nodded calmly, then swept out with his divine sense, instantly encompassing the entire Skyrite Mountains within it. Naturally, this included Gislason and that Lord Prefect. Linley sent mentally.

“Patriarch, just tell this Lord Prefect that I am currently training and unable to meet with any guests. Unless something important happens, please help me cope with them.”

Gislason was startled.

He actually hadn't detected Linley's divine sense at all. He couldn't help but sigh. “Paragons really are incredible. The strength of their spiritual energy vastly surpasses mine.” Gislason understood Linley's temperament as well; Linley couldn't be bothered to engage in meetings like this, which were solely for the purpose of people trying to befriend him.

“Alright, I'll help you deal with them.” Gislason replied. “Then, in the future, unless there is an important matter, you won't meet with any figures like these?”

“Right.” Linley sent mentally. “Aside from people I am familiar with, such as Reisgem. If I'm not familiar with them and have no connection to them, unless there is an important matter, I won't meet with any of them.”

Linley's decision was quite wise, because after the arrival of this Lord Prefect from the Jadefloat Continent, every few months or every few years, someone would come. Some wanted to befriend Linley, while others wanted to ask Linley to help them with something. Still others wanted to take Linley as their teacher.

In short, many came to disturb him.

Fortunately, the Four Divine Beasts clan stopped them, making it so that no one could see Linley.

Actually, it was normal for many people to come see Linley. After all, Paragons rarely publicized their residences. It was very hard for people to locate Paragons.

Within his estate.

“Uncle.” Ina looked suspiciously at Linley. “Just now, that person who wanted to come visit you thought up a method to deliver this letter. And indeed, the letter states quite clearly the nature of the injustice done to him, and he really is quite pitiable. Uncle, why can't you be so kind as to help him?”

Linley couldn't help but chuckle as he glanced sideways at Ina.

“Nana.” Bebe stared at his daughter. “Who knows how many grudges and how much hatred the Infernal Realm holds? You want your uncle to help one person, but what about the countless other grudges? In the Infernal Realm, people are being killed at every moment of every day. Do you think every person who died deserved to die? They died unjust deaths as well. Do you want your uncle to make the entire Infernal Realm his enemy, and go get revenge for every single person who died?”

Ina was stunned.

Ina and Wade lived under the protection of Linley and Bebe, and so they had almost never suffered. They weren't like Linley, who had walked a fine line between life and death to his current level. They saw the affairs of the world so simply.

“If I were to help people who are neither family nor friends, then I would need a trillion clones.” Linley chuckled.

Ina let out an adorable sniff, her nose wrinkled.

“Forget about the affairs of others; there are many personal matters that I haven't carried out very well.” Linley shook his head and sighed.

“Eh?” Ina looked at Linley, puzzled.

Linley chuckled, not going into detail.

Although these days had been peaceful and happy, Linley noticed how his father, Hogg, would occasionally stare blankly into space when he was by himself. Linley understood that his father was missing his mother. Linley had always been thinking to himself...that one day, he should go pay a visit to the Divine Light Plane and ask for the Chief Sovereign of Light to restore his mother's freedom.

Time flowed on, and in the blink of an eye, a hundred years passed.

Quite a few people were gathered within Linley's estate.

“Third Bro suddenly shut himself inside a few days ago. All of his clones are in training. He said that he reached a critical moment...but a sudden flash of insight should be very fast. Why hasn't he come out yet?” Reynolds couldn't help but glance at a distant corridor, while George just laughed calmly, “Why the rush? You have eternal life now.”

Reynolds, hearing this, couldn't help but laugh.

Indeed, to Deities who were untouched by time, ten years or a hundred years was nothing.

“Eh, Third Bro is coming?” Yale said.

Reynolds and the others all turned to look. Even some of the chatting, laughing people located in the grassy area some distance away noticed that a figure had emerged from the corridor, a figure with long, unbound brown hair. It was Linley. Linley was in a fairly good mood today. “I've trained for a hundred years. I've finally fused these two types of profound mysteries.”

It was exceedingly hard to fuse profound mysteries of different Laws.

After becoming a Soul Mutate, his soul had increased in power enormously, and yet he still had to spend so many years before making a true breakthrough.

“And this is just the beginning. Next I will fuse three kinds...and the amount of time I will have to spend will increase exponentially. My goal is fusing four.” Linley was quite eager as well. If he was able to fuse four types of profound mysteries from different Laws, how powerful would he become? Most likely, he would be able to kill even Paragons.

“Boss.” Bebe ran over.

“My father?” Linley asked.

“Uncle's in his room. I haven't seen him today.” Bebe said.

“Right. I'll go find my father.” Linley glanced towards the others, then moved towards his father's residence. After completing his training, Linley's first thought was that it was time to go to the Divine Light Plane. “Regardless of whether or not I will be successful, I still at least need to go see the Chief Sovereign of Light and try asking.”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 6,

Overgod Artifact

“Father!” Linley stepped into the room.

Hogg, currently reading a book, lifted his head. Seeing Linley, he couldn't help but smile. “Linley, I heard you were in closed-door training. What, did you make a breakthrough?”

“Right.” Linley nodded, then sat down to the side. “Father, in two days, I plan to head to the Divine Light Plane to go visit the Chief Sovereign of Light. I want to see if there is any hope of finding mother and letting her regain her freedom.”

“Huh?” Hogg's hands trembled. The book fell to the table as he stared at Linley, stunned. “Linley, you are going to the Divine Light Realm? But...last time, didn't you tell me that in the Planar Wars, you killed members of the Augusta clan? Isn't the Chief Sovereign of Light the ancestor of the Augusta clan? For you to go will be very dangerous.” Hogg was frantic.

Hogg knew about virtually all of Linley's experiences over the years.

“Father, don't worry. The Chief Sovereign of Light has 182 children, and that's just in the second generation. The one I killed was a third generation member. The Augusta clan has more than a thousand individuals in the second and third generations. The Chief Sovereign of Light won't care about it.” Linley was absolutely certain about this.

If the Chief Sovereign of Light cared, Reisgem wouldn't have dared to have organized them to attack.

“But he is still a Chief Sovereign. It would be utter simplicity for him to kill you.” Hogg was very worried.

“Precisely because he is a Chief Sovereign, he wouldn't lower himself to kill me.” Linley said comfortingly. “Don't worry, Father! The Chief Sovereign of Light and I don't have a grudge against each other. If he wants to kill me, he has plenty of methods to do so. But he's done nothing!”

“Didn't you say that there is no hope?” Hogg asked.

“I said the chances were very low.” Linley laughed bitterly. “But if I don't at least try, I can't be sure. If I give it a try, I might be successful. Sovereigns wish for Paragons to be their Emissaries. Perhaps, given my status, there's a slight sliver of a chance that the Chief Sovereign of Light would restore my mother to freedom.”

“A slight sliver of a chance...” Hogg nodded slightly

Hogg looked at Linley, then said solemnly, “Linley, you are no longer a child. You have your own ideas and thoughts about what to do...but as your father, I must warn you that if this will be dangerous, you had best not go! I admitted don't know much about Sovereigns and Paragons, and thus can't say much on that subject. I'll let you make your own decisions. But safety first! You and Wharton...the two of you are just as important as your mother to me.”

“Right.” Hearing this, Linley felt...as though he were a child again, listening to his father instruct him.

Linley's decision was to go find Patriarch Gislason the next day.

Within the hall.

“What?” Gislason, who had just sat down, couldn’t help but stand in shock. “Linley, you say you are going to go to the Divine Light Plane to visit the Chief Sovereign?”

“Right.” Linley laughed calmly. “I’m just coming to let you know that this trip of mine will take at least ten years and perhaps up to a hundred. All I can do is to go beg the Chief Sovereign of Light.”

Gislason hesitated, then said, “Linley, based on what I learned from Father in the past, the Chief Sovereign of Light isn’t a very amiable person. The Chief Sovereign of Light is extremely arrogant, and extremely domineering. If you go beg him...the chance for success truly is very low. In addition, I’m worried that if you say a single word not to his liking, he will kill you.”

“Arrogant and domineering?” Linley frowned.

Gislason nodded. “Right. The countless planes of the multiverse have a total of eleven Chief Sovereigns. The strongest are, of course, the Chief Sovereigns of the four Edicts! As for the other seven, the Chief Sovereign of Light is the strongest.”

Linley understood. The Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were indeed mighty.

But he hadn’t expected...that of the Chief Sovereigns of the seven Elemental Laws, the Chief Sovereign of Light was the mightiest.

“Why is the Chief Sovereign of Light more powerful than the other Elemental Chief Sovereigns?” Linley asked, puzzled.

Gislason was the son of the Azure Dragon, after all. He knew many secrets. He laughed and said, “This involves a certain treasure...an Overgod artifact!”

“Overgod artifact?” Linley’s eyes instantly lit up.

Just from the term alone, Linley understood what it represented. Divine artifacts. Sovereign artifacts. Overgod artifacts! Clearly, there were three levels of artifacts.

“Overgod artifacts are created by the Overgods themselves! Because there are only four Overgods, the Overgods of Fate, Destruction, Death, and Life, there are also only four kinds of Overgod artifacts. The four most powerful Sovereigns are the Chief Sovereigns of Destruction, Death, Fate, and Life. They all have Overgod artifacts. This is why they are the most powerful Chief Sovereigns!”

Linley nodded slightly.

No wonder those four Chief Sovereigns were powerful. So it was because they had Overgod artifacts.

“Eleven Chief Sovereigns...five of them have Overgod artifacts. Aside from the four Chief Sovereigns I just mentioned, the last one is the Chief Sovereign of Light! Although the Chief Sovereign of Light has an Overgod artifact, it isn’t a match for him, and so he’s unable to use all of its power. Thus, he is weaker than the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, but more powerful than the other six Chief Sovereigns of the Laws!”

Linley sighed to himself.

The power of Overgod artifacts must truly be tremendous. There were only four Overgods to begin with, and they were the personifications of the Edicts to begin with. It was only natural that the Chief Sovereign of Light wouldn’t be suited to handling an Overgod artifact. It was only reasonable that he would thus be weaker than the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

“Overgod artifacts...where do they come from, and how did these five Chief Sovereigns acquire them?” Linley asked.

“I’m uncertain.” Gislason shook his head. “This happened long, long ago. Even my father and the other three didn’t know the details, much less me. The Chief Sovereign of Light’s is arrogant and domineering, but he has the power to be domineering. After all, he has an Overgod artifact!”

“Overgod artifact...” Linley let out a sigh. “Can it be that despite the passage of so many years, there hasn’t been a second Overgod artifact?”

“No. If there was one, wouldn’t the Chief Sovereigns and Sovereigns go wild over it and fight for it? The Chief Sovereign of Light has one, but the Chief Sovereigns of the other six elements do not. I imagine that in their hearts, those six Chief Sovereigns of the Laws feel very unhappy about this. If they had any chance to acquire one, would they give it up?” Gislason laughed as he spoke.

Linley couldn’t help but laugh. “I wonder what an Overgod artifact looks like. I probably wouldn’t recognize one even if I saw one.”

“Overgod artifacts? Only someone at the level of a Sovereign can make use of them. There’s no point in us acquiring them; in fact, acquiring them would only invite disaster upon ourselves.” Gislason changed the topic. “Enough about Overgod artifacts. That’s a very distant topic. Linley, you say that you wish to go to the Divine Light Plane, but I urge you not to go. Truly, don’t go!”

Linley chuckled. “He might be powerful, but he is still a Sovereign. Would he lower himself to act against me?”

Gislason let out a low sigh, then suddenly spoke through divine sense. “Linley, I will tell you a secret.”

Linley was stunned!

The two were chatting in the hall, but Gislason actually used divine sense to speak? Could the secret be so great?

“Patriarch, what is the secret?” Linley was puzzled.

“Linley.” Gislason’s expression was solemn. “I’ve always suspected something about the deaths of the four ancestors of our clan!”

“Suspected something?” Linley didn’t understand.

“I suspect...that the killer was the Chief Sovereign of Light!” Gislason sent.

Linley was badly shocked. Gislason continued to speak through divine sense. “Although the four ancestors of our clan were merely Lesser Sovereigns, their innate divine abilities were very strange; their four divine abilities could actually combine into one, with their four types of divine ability energy able to fuse as well and result in an exceedingly powerful supreme technique. Even High Sovereigns such as the Chief Sovereigns were quite apprehensive.”

Combine four innate divine abilities into one?

Linley knew that the divine abilities of the Four Divine Beasts clan were rather unusual, but he had no way of understanding what they would be like when used by the four ancestors. There was one thing he did know; without question, it would have been far more powerful than when Linley and his peers used them. After all, Linley and the others only carried the lineage of the divine beasts in their veins; they weren’t true divine beasts.

“You say...that you suspect the killer was the Chief Sovereign of Light? Why would it be him?” Linley asked.

“First of all, very few people were capable of killing the four ancestors! The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts...the Chief Sovereign of Fate doesn’t get involved in worldly affairs. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction was on excellent terms with our ancestors. The Chief Sovereign of Death...as long as someone doesn’t offend her, she wouldn’t do anything to them. The Chief Sovereign of Life is said to be quite kind-hearted and rarely kills mortals, much less Sovereigns. In addition, our four ancestors didn’t have any conflicts or opposing interests with the Chief Sovereign of Life. Thus...the only one left is the Chief Sovereign of Light!” Gislason sent mentally.

Linley frowned.

“The Chief Sovereign of Light has an Overgod artifact. He has enough power to resist the combined innate divine ability of the four ancestors.” Gislason’s eyes held anger and hatred within them. Although there were eleven Chief Sovereigns, since the other six didn’t have Overgod artifacts, there was no way they would be able to kill the four ancestors when they were fighting together.”

“Did he have conflicting interests with our four ancestors?” Linley asked mentally.

“Not a conflicting interest per se, but...back then, our Four Divine Beasts clan was spread throughout the planes of the multiverse. We were extremely powerful, and there were quite a few people who believed that our Four Divine Beasts clan was the number one clan of the planes of the multiverse. But the Augusta clan...there were also many who believed that they were the number one clan. If there was a conflict...I imagine the only conflict was one of conflicting reputations.” Gislason couldn’t find anything else either.

After all, the four ancestors wouldn’t have gone out of their way to go offend the Chief Sovereign of Light either.

“Fighting over the title of the ‘number one clan’? That can’t be right.” Linley couldn’t believe it. “The so-called struggle over the title of ‘number one clan’ was a reputational struggle. The Chief Sovereign of Light would kill our four ancestors because of it? This reason doesn’t make much sense.”

“I...I’m not sure either. But logically speaking, he’s the only possible culprit.” Gislason clearly also felt that his reason wasn’t very convincing. “Linley, if he really was the one who killed them, then he definitely has malicious feelings towards the Four Divine Beasts clan. He didn’t kill us because he didn’t care about us, but now that you are a Paragon...I’m afraid that he would...”

“Patriarch, he might very well be the killer, but he also might not be.” Linley sent. “Also, you said that the other Chief Sovereigns wouldn’t be able to kill the four ancestors when they joined forces. But one if they were killed one by one? If someone truly intended to kill them, it’s possible that they didn’t give our four ancestors a chance to join forces.”

Gislason was startled. He immediately sent back, “The four ancestors were extremely close to each other. They rarely separated.”

“Rarely separated? That doesn’t mean they were always together.” Linley sent back. “Don’t worry, Patriarch. Even if the Chief Sovereign of Light was the killer, would he act against me, a Deity? Even if he was nervous, he wouldn’t be nervous of me, a Paragon. After all, a Paragon is still just a Deity.”

Gislason, hearing this, let out a bitter laugh. “Linley, it seems you have set your mind on going.”

“Right. If I don’t make the trip, I won’t be satisfied.” Linley nodded.

After all, this involved his mother!

Both he and Wharton wanted to meet the mother who had given birth to them! As for his father, his father had always been thinking about his mother.

“If you want to go, you should at least let Lord Beirut know. Lord Beirut is on fairly close terms with the Bloodridge Sovereign, and he knows many things. It would be good for you to ask him his opinion.” Gislason didn’t want Linley to go, but clearly, he wasn’t able to convince Linley. All he could do was entrust his hopes to Beirut.

Linley, upon hearing this, had to admit that this was a good idea.

“Then, Patriarch, please help me make some inquiries. I know that our clan should have a method to communicate with Lord Beirut, right?” Linley laughed.

“Right. In the past, my clone was there. However, now that the crisis is over, my clone has returned. Still, we still have intelligence agents there.” Gislason nodded. “I will make the arrangements. I imagine that in a little while, Beirut’s response will arrive.”

Linley nodded slightly. He couldn’t go wrong listening to Beirut.

“Then I’ll go back now.” Linley laughed. He planned to leave tomorrow.

“Patriarch.” Right at this moment, a guard from outside the door ran in.

Linley and Gislason both turned to look. The guard bowed, then reported, “Patriarch, Elder Linley, someone has arrived asking to meet with Elder Linley.” Gislason frowned. “Ordinary guests can be instructed to leave.” Very many people wished to meet with Linley.

Linley wouldn’t meet with any commander-level experts, but Gislason would.

For those who were too weak, however, they would be refused entry outside the mountain.

“But, Patriarch, this person says that he is Linley’s old friend. His name is...Olivier!” The guard said hurriedly.

“Olivier?” Linley was rather surprised. “Come, I’ll go with you.”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 7, Olivier

Linley traversed Dragon Avenue, flying downwards and quickly arriving outside the Skykrite Mountains. He saw Olivier there, floating in the air outside the mountain range.

Next to the location where Olivier was hovering, there was also a flourishing ironbark tree. Its lustrous, knife-like metallic leaves, under the light of the Blood Sun, seemed terrifying. As for Olivier, his black and white hair was tousled and rather mussed. His face was ashen. He seemed quite dispirited. In front of him was a black-haired youth.

“What happened to Olivier?” Linley, seeing this, couldn’t help but frown. “He seems quite depressed.”

In Linley’s mind, Olivier was an expert who always strove to reach the peak and who wasn’t afraid of loneliness. Even when in the most dire of situations, Olivier shouldn’t be the sort of person to grow depressed and give up. Thus, the scene in front of Linley puzzled him.

“Elder Linley, that’s the person who claims to be your friend, ‘Olivier.’” The warriors of his clan reported respectfully.

“He is indeed my friend.” Linley smiled then flew towards Olivier.

Olivier had noticed Linley as well, and he couldn’t help but fly towards Linley while squeezing out a smile. It was still quite a stroke of karmic luck for two people of a similar age from the same homeland to meet each other here in the Infernal Realm.

“Linley.” Olivier forced a smile.

“Haha, Olivier...after the last time we parted, a thousand years has passed without us meeting again.” Linley said with a laugh, and then looked towards the youth next to Olivier. “Oh, Olivier, the youth next to you is...?” Linley realized that there seemed to be a rather baleful aura coming from the youth’s forehead, and he seemed quite cold and emotionless.

Olivier took the youth’s hand, then turned and glanced sideways at Linley. “This is my son. Deia [Dai’ya].”

“Son?” Linley was slightly startled.

Olivier had actually gotten married? Olivier had always pursued perfection, and he had never had a wife.

“Uncle Linley.” The cold youth, ‘Deia’, bowed fractionally as he spoke.

“Excellent.” Linley laughed and nodded, then said to the nearby Olivier, “Olivier, don’t just stand there. Come, come to my place. Let’s chat slowly once we get back. Haha, it has been so many years since I have seen you. You even have a son...and you’ve become a Highgod. Excellent.”

Linley laughed as he spoke, then flew alongside Olivier back to his own residence.

Moments later, they arrived at Linley’s residence.

“Elder!” The guards in front of the residence’s gates all saluted respectfully, their eyes filled with a hint of veneration. There were many warriors who were willing to be a guard for Linley’s residence. To be a guard for a Highgod Paragon? This was something one could feel very proud of.

“Deia, come in.” Linley laughed as he spoke to the cold youth.

Seeing how Deia acted, Linley sighed in his heart. “In the past, Olivier was quite cold as well. I didn’t expect that his son would be even colder than him, with such a strong, baleful aura, as though he is about to kill someone.” Still, Linley understood that it wasn’t that Deia was being disrespectful to him; it was that Deia had been like this ever since he was born, and so it was only natural that he had become like this at all times now.

After entering the residence.

“Heeey...Olivier?!” A large group of people was in the grassy courtyard, and Bebe, who was chatting loudly with everyone else, called out in surprise as he saw Olivier.

“Olivier. Long time no see.” Reynolds laughed as he walked over to greet him.

“Olivier.” Wharton and the others who were on friendly terms with Olivier all walked over. In the past, Olivier had stayed at Dragonblood Castle for quite a long period of time, and he was quite familiar with many of the people who lived there. “You all came?” Olivier was very surprised as well. All he could do was continue to force a smile as he greeted these people.

A large group of people immediately surrounded Olivier and Deia.

Linley watched this calmly, musing to himself, “Olivier seems to be rather...off.”

Surrounded by so many people, Olivier had no choice but to chat with them.

“Father.” Deia tugged at Olivier’s hand slightly, clearly not accustomed to being surrounded by so many people.

“Enough, everyone, let’s break it up. There will be plenty of opportunities to see Olivier in the future. Olivier just returned. Let him rest a bit.” Linley said with a laugh. Immediately, the group slowly broke apart, and Linley then walked to stand next to Olivier. He asked softly, “Olivier, is there something on your mind?”

Olivier glanced at Linley, then shook his head. “Nothing.”

Olivier clearly didn’t want to discuss it!

Seeing the response, Linley didn’t pursue this line of questioning. Laughing, he said, “Then stay here at my place. We have many people here...it will be more lively.”

“Fine.” Olivier laughed and nodded.

And then, Linley left as well.

Within a large, empty courtyard. Deia was seated at the corner of a stone table. The stone table was covered with fruit and food, and Deia was silently eating some of it, not chatting with the others at all.

Wharton, Reynolds, and Olivier were all seated together.

“That’s the way Deia is. He likes the quiet.” Olivier explained.

“This is a problem with your child raising methods.” Wharton chortled.

Olivier forced out a laugh, but didn't discuss this any further. He suddenly looked around, then said, puzzled, "Wharton, Reynolds...when I originally came to the Four Divine Beasts clan, didn't Linley's group live in that large gorge? But on this visit, I can tell that Linley's estate is now incredibly luxurious and takes up a large space. It is quite eye-catching. What's going on?"

A person's residence would be commensurate to their status.

Naturally, Olivier would be puzzled as to why someone would have such a large residence within the Four Divine Beasts clan.

"You haven't met with my Third Bro in over a thousand years. The past thousand years, however, Third Bro has gained strength faster than ever before." Reynolds laughed.

"Oh?" Olivier was very surprised.

"I'll tell you." Reynolds laughed, then began to explain. "Let's start from when the Four Divine Beasts clan escaped their crisis. The eight great clans were pressing down upon the Four Divine Beasts clan from right outside the mountains..." Reynolds explained everything, including the events in the Netherworld, the events in Tartarus, and even what Linley had done in the Planar Battlefield. He explained it all in one go.

"Paragon?" Hearing that Linley had become a Paragon, Olivier's eyes turned completely round.

Wharton added, "But of course. During the Planar War, my big brother actually dueled another Paragon named Magnus, right there in the center of the Stellar River's corridor. While being watched by countless soldiers and many commanders, my big brother gave Magnus a kick and forced him into chaotic space. Hey! Olivier, why are you leaving?"

Olivier, hearing this, actually rose to his feet and hurriedly walked away.

"That's weird..." Reynolds didn't understand.

Olivier walked right next to Bebe, saying frantically, "Bebe, where's your Boss?"

Bebe laughed and pointed to the distance. "He's in that building over there. My Boss is right there."

"Thanks." Olivier hurriedly moved in that direction, his body flashing forward, reappearing before the building.

Bebe, puzzled, frowned. "My Boss is right there, just a few hundred meters away. Why use divine power to fly? It would only take a few seconds to walk that distance. What's the rush?"

Olivier pushed open the door to the study of that building, then walked in. He immediately saw Linley, who was currently reading a book. Linley, puzzled, lifted his head, then laughed, "Oh, Olivier?"

Olivier took three steps forward, walking to the center of the study.

Suddenly...

Olivier knelt down, his knees striking hard against the stone floor with a 'bang' sound. Olivier's face was solemn, and his eyes were filled with entreaty. "Linley, you have to help me!"

"Rise, quick, rise." Linley was completely stunned by Olivier's actions. Waving his hand, he sent a surge of Will-infused divine earth power forward, lifting Olivier up. Olivier looked straight at Linley, who hurriedly said, "Don't be like this. If there's something you need, just tell me. I will definitely help you."

Linley walked out from behind the reading table, hurriedly moving to stand in front of Olivier, then pulling Olivier to sit down at a nearby chair. Linley sat as well. "What is going on? Tell me."

Linley had known as soon as he had seen Olivier today that Olivier seemed to be in a bad situation. But Olivier wasn't willing to discuss it, and so there was nothing Linley could do.

"This matter...when speaking of it..." Olivier smiled bitterly as he spoke. "Linley, in the past, when I left Dylin and the others to adventure alone, I did indeed make a breakthrough while walking that line between life and death. My divine light clone reached the Highgod level. And then, while taking on a Fiend mission, I met Diana [Dai'na]! Diana was also a lone traveler who had taken on multiple missions. During that dangerous mission, the two of us quickly grew close, and then Diana and I became husband and wife."

Linley nodded slightly.

It was indeed quite normal for two lone travelers to marry each other and become husband and wife.

"Roughly twenty years ago, Diana and I had children. A pair of twin boys; Deia and Leya [Lei'ya]." Olivier sighed. "Everything was beautiful. The four of us lived a life of peace. Diana and I were both Highgods, and so we were able to guarantee that Deia and his brother would live safe lives...but when Deia was five years old! A man named Bonin [Bo'ning] led a group of subordinates over. When he found us, do you know what he said?"

Olivier's eyes were filled with rage. "He said...Diana was his wife!!!"

Linley was stunned.

"This man named Bonin told Diana to go with him! Of course we weren't willing, but he had tens of subordinates, all of them Highgods. My wife and I weren't able to resist at all! But Diana and I would rather die than agree. But this Bonin threatened Diana...he said that if Diana left with him, he would spare me and our two sons! If Diana refused, then he would kill me and our sons." Olivier's eyes became filled with murder as he said this.

"This Bonin...he gave me a chance to fight him by myself. If I was able to beat him, he would let us go." Olivier clenched his fists. "But...I lost! I was far from being a match for him!"

Linley sighed in his heart.

Olivier explained it in a very simple manner, but Linley could completely imagine what that scene was like. A man who wasn't even able to protect his wife and children, and had to watch as others took them away, that sort of pain and grief...

"For the sake of myself and my two sons, Diana left with him!" Olivier's tears began to fall.

There were many unjust things in this world. If he, Olivier, was a supreme expert, he could have effortlessly killed this enemy. But he wasn't a supreme expert. Or at least...he wasn't for now! Thus, all he could do was watch as his woman left with someone else!

"But Diana was wrong!" Olivier said furiously. "That Bonin was a bastard!!! He actually didn't spare me and my children. After taking Diana away, he sent people to kill us."

Linley's face changed.

Bonin had first promised to spare Olivier and his children, so as to coax Diana away. But then, he had sent people to kill Olivier? This was indeed excessively vile.

“Haha...” Olivier just laughed coldly. “What he didn’t know...was that after he took Diana away, I immediately left with my sons, and then I began to fuse with a darkness-type Highgod spark!” By then, Olivier had already reached the Highgod level in his divine light clone, but his divine darkness clone was still at the God level. Of course, he had already comprehended five profound mysteries, and was only missing the final one.

If he were to train normally, in just a few more centuries, Olivier would’ve broken through on his own.

But...

He wasn’t able to wait any longer!

Olivier needed to get revenge! In addition, he was a Soul Mutate; even if he fused one divine spark, the other divine clone was one which had broken through on its own. Given that he had the soul of a Soul Mutate, he would still have a chance to fuse profound mysteries in the future.

Because Olivier had already comprehended five mysteries, the process of fusing with a divine spark was naturally quite fast. In a few short months, he had succeeded.

“Those people were able to locate me, though, and they pursued me and my children and attacked us. By then, I had already fused the divine spark. By using fused divine power and two profound mysteries I had fused long ago, I killed them! Kill them all!” Olivier growled. Even before becoming a Deity, Olivier had already sensed that there were areas in the Laws of Light and Laws of Darkness that were compatible, and had fused a profound mystery from each.

Centuries earlier, Olivier had succeeded.

After fusing with a divine spark, Olivier had access to fused divine power and fused Laws. Olivier’s power had increased exponentially, and he became comparable to a Seven Star Fiend.

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“However...” Olivier said bitterly. “Although I killed all of those people, there were too many of them. I had to protect Deia and Leya, my two sons, at the same time. I was only able to block two or three of them, not all of them! Clearly, that person named Bonin had given the order to kill me and my two sons! In the battle, Leya died! My power was only enough to permit me to protect Deia.”

Linley sighed in his heart.

Even though his power had risen exponentially, Olivier was by himself, while he had two burdens to shoulder! Meanwhile, the enemy consisted of a large group of Highgods. Once they launched mass attacks...it was quite impressive that Olivier was even able to protect a single son.

“Olivier, you had months. Why didn't you deliver your children to a city?” Linley couldn't help but ask.

If Olivier had left the children in a city, wouldn't they be safe?

“I didn't have enough time.” Olivier said bitterly. “I wanted to. If I was travelling alone, I definitely would have been able to make it to a city, but I had to bring the two of them as well. They weren't even Deities, just Saints. Their flying speed was too fast. My speed was impacted because I had to help bring them alone. In addition, Diana and I lived in a distant gorge. Given our power, bandits wouldn't dare to come make trouble for us, but that gorge was more than a year and a half away from the nearest city.”

Linley sighed to himself.

Olivier's speed was simply too slow! Prior to fusing with a divine spark, Olivier was only an ordinary Highgod. How fast could he possibly move, given that he was burdened with two children?

“After killing those people, I finally managed to make it to a city with my son. I put Deia in a hotel, and then, by myself, I charged straight for the Yustone Mountains of the Skymount Prefecture!” Olivier growled.

“Skymount Prefecture?” Linley frowned.

Bloodridge Continent was extremely vast. Skymount Prefecture was located towards the center of Bloodridge Continent, and was hundreds of millions of kilometers away from Indigo Prefecture.

“Right. That person named Bonin was located in Skymount Prefecture.” Olivier nodded. “Bonin had been extremely arrogant. When he took Diana away, he told me...that if I had any ability, I should go seek him out at the Yustone Mountains of the Skymount Prefecture. He would be waiting for me there.”

Linley nodded slightly as he listened to this. He could imagine how arrogant Bonin had acted.

“The city I had entered wasn't too far away from the Yustone Mountains of Skymount Prefecture. Given that my speed increased dramatically after I fused those two types of Highgod power, in but a single year, I made it to the Yustone Mountains. After investigating secretly, I learned that this Bonin was actually the son of the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture.” Olivier laughed coldly. “I couldn't care less that he was the son of the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture. All I cared about was killing this Bonin and saving my wife, Diana.”

Linley understood that at that point in time, Olivier was at the brink of insanity.

“Bonin was untameably unruly, and was not on good terms with his father. Thus, he didn’t live with his father, instead living within the Yustone Mountains, where he built a castle for himself.” Olivier growled. “I stealthily made my way in, planning to find Bonin and then kill him. And, indeed, after fusing a divine spark, my power surpassed his by a level! I was almost able to kill him...”

“But...he...he actually had a drop of Sovereign’s Might!”

Olivier laughed bitterly as he spoke.

Linley now understood. That drop of Sovereign’s Might was most likely what the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture had given to his son as a protective measure to save his life if needed.

“After using Sovereign’s Might, his power vastly surpassed mine! All I could do was flee, and at that time, my wife, Diana, came out to block Bonin as well, threatening to kill herself. Bonin was disturbed, and in that moment, I made my escape.” Olivier said bitterly. “After that failure, I understood that I wouldn’t be able to kill him by myself. Thus, I had no choice but to secretly slip away. I returned, taking away Deia, and came to Indigo Prefecture. I was planning that since you, Linley, were quietly training here, I would do the same.”

Although Olivier had grown far more powerful, the trip over to Indigo Prefecture had still taken more than ten years, as he was carrying his child with him. That child had grown into a youth as well.

Linley understood, now, why Deia was so cold, so remote, so baleful.

Clearly...Deia had grown up in the midst of hatred.

“I understood that after that battle, Bonin would only stay in the Yustone Mountains if he still had more Sovereign’s Might and thus had nothing to fear. If he didn’t, he would probably be afraid of my return and thus take Diana and leave. His father is the Lord Prefect. Even if I train for ten million more years, I won’t be able to avenge my son or find Diana!”

He had been in the grips of despair. All he wanted to do was train quietly, but then...Olivier had heard others say that Linley had become a Paragon.

“I had already given up all hope. But...but I heard, Linley, that you have become a Paragon.” Olivier looked towards Linley.

Olivier knew that Linley was very powerful, at the Seven Star Fiend level, but behind Bonin was the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture. Thus, Olivier hadn’t told Linley about this, as he didn’t want Linley to get dragged into this.

“Skymount Prefecture?”

Linley nodded slightly.

Olivier’s grief and misery caused Linley to feel quite moved. His wife had been taken, and one of his sons had been killed, yet he didn’t have the power to fight back or even take revenge.

“Olivier, don’t worry. I will accompany you.” Linley nodded.

“Thank you.” Olivier, upon hearing Linley’s response, couldn’t help but immediately thank you, then say, “Then Linley, when should we head out?”

“This...” Linley hesitated.

“How about we head out tomorrow?” Olivier couldn’t wait at all. His wife had been taken and his son had been killed. Hatred festered in Olivier’s heart, gnawing at his soul like locusts. Now that the flames of vengeance had been kindled within his heart once more, Olivier didn’t want to waste any more time.

“Tomorrow?” Linley frowned.

Tomorrow, Linley was planning to go to the Divine Light Plane!

Actually, Linley felt a hint of nervousness about this trip to the Divine Light Plane, after what Gislason had said. He was afraid that the almighty Chief Sovereign of Light really would stoop to killing him. But he had no choice if he wanted to save his mother. He had only one option; to ask the Chief Sovereign of Light to release her!

Thus, although it was dangerous, Linley was still going to go.

Linley had originally planned to allow his divine earth clone to head to the Divine Light Plane.

His divine earth clone was just one clone, but it too had a mutated soul, and it too was infused with his Will. Although the power of the Will wasn’t as great as that of Linley’s original body, the power of his divine earth clone was also comparable to the power of Paragons.

Linley’s original body was more powerful in terms of power and Will than Paragons.

As for his divine earth, wind, and water clones, the power of their Will was slightly weaker, and so they were slightly weaker than Paragons.

For the sake of his mother, Linley was willing to send his divine earth clone over. Even if the Chief Sovereign of Light was so shameless as to kill him, Linley would at most lose a divine earth clone. Linley would still be a Paragon-level expert.

But...with Olivier’s request, Linley was now put in a hard position.

Indeed, Linley could allow his divine earth clone to go to the Divine Light Plane and his original body accompany Olivier to the Skymount Prefecture.

But...if both clones simultaneously revealed Paragon-level power in the Divine Light Plane and in the Infernal Realm, anyone with deductive reasoning abilities would immediately understand that Linley was a Soul Mutate!

This was because Paragons generally had one element they specialized in. It was virtually impossible for a person to be in a Paragon in one element, and then also become a Paragon with his other divine clones. It was already quite terrifying for someone to become a Paragon in one element; a person who had two divine clones at the Paragon level was something utterly inconceivable.

If Linley revealed Paragon-level power in two different planes with two different bodies, of course others would find it bizarre and investigate!

The secret of his soul mutation...for now, Linley didn’t want to reveal it!

“Linley, you...you are busy?” Olivier asked.

“I...” Linley hesitated.

“If you have an important matter to attend to, then my matter can be delayed. There’s no need to rush it.” Olivier said hurriedly.

But Linley understood that given Olivier's son had been killed and his wife had been taken, Olivier was undoubtedly thinking about revenge every moment. He wanted to rescue his wife.

"Boss, Boss, the Patriarch is coming." The voice of Bebe, from outside.

"Patriarch?" Linley turned his head and saw Gislason striding in, clearly in a hurry.

"Patriarch." Linley hurriedly rose to his feet to welcome him, and the nearby Olivier hurriedly dried his tears and rose as well.

Upon entering the room, Gislason hurriedly said, "Linley, just now, I did what you asked me to do and sent someone to deliver a message to Lord Beirut. Lord Beirut's response came immediately. He asked me to tell you...no matter what, don't go to the Divine Light Plane!"

Linley was stunned.

"Divine Light Plane?" Olivier now understood as well. Most likely, the reason why Linley had hesitated earlier was because he had to go to the Divine Light Plane on business.

"Why did Lord Beirut say this?" Linley was completely puzzled.

"Lord Beirut said that when your divine fire clone was on the Yulan continent, you had discussed with him the matter of saving your father, friends, and mother. He thus made a trip to the Divine Light Realm and sought out the Chief Sovereign of Light to help you make the request. After all, there are no grudges between Lord Beirut and the Chief Sovereign of Light."

Linley couldn't help but feel a surge of gratitude. His divine fire clone had merely mentioned this matter, but Beirut had actually made a personal visit to see the Chief Sovereign of Light.

"But...the Chief Sovereign of Light didn't agree!" Gislason said with a sigh. "Lord Beirut also asked the Bloodridge Sovereign, and the Bloodridge Sovereign responded...that it was impossible to force the Chief Sovereign of Light to restore an Angel's freedom. Even if a Sovereign went and asked in person, the chances would be low. If you went...there would be no chance at all."

That look in his father's eyes appeared in Linley's mind.

"Father...there's nothing I can do." Linley felt powerless.

The Chief Sovereign of Death had said this as well; that even if she went in person, the chances would be low. Now, the Bloodridge Sovereign had said the same thing, and Beirut had actually gone in person.

"Linley, when Lord Beirut was discussing this matter with the Chief Sovereign of Light, he also said that you were willing to be the Chief Sovereign's Emissary, in exchange for your mother's freedom. But the Chief Sovereign of Light still would not agree." Gislason said.

Even becoming a Sovereign's Emissary was useless?

Linley no longer had any cards left to play.

"In addition, Lord Beirut told me that I had to stop you, that you absolutely could not be permitted to go to the Divine Light Plane. It's fine if you don't go, but if you were to come face to face with the Chief Sovereign of Light, it was very possible that the Chief Sovereign would immediately kill you. This isn't just because of the issue between you and the Augusta clan; there's another reason as well." Gislason said in an urging manner.

"Another reason?" Linley couldn't think of anything he had done to offend the Chief Sovereign of Light.

Was it because he had driven Magnus into chaotic space?

But Magnus was a Paragon of Fate, and an emissary of the Chief Sovereign of Fate, not the Chief Sovereign of Light! The only reason he had chosen to help Montelo was because he had a long, close relationship with the Augusta Patriarch.

“What is the reason?” Linley asked.

“Lord Beirut said that for now, this reason could not be made public, which is why he didn’t tell the messenger.” Gislason said.

Linley nodded.

After so many years, Linley had developed great trust for Beirut.

“Then for now, I’ll give up the notion of going to the Divine Light Plane...” Linley murmured to himself, and then turned to look at Olivier. “Olivier, tomorrow, I will accompany you. We will head out and go to the Skymount Prefecture!”

A look of surprise and joy appeared on Olivier’s face.

The very next day. At the gates to Linley’s estate.

“Boss, just let me go with you. I’m bored to death.” Bebe chortled. Linley wasn’t able to dissuade Bebe, and so Bebe tagged along as well. This trip to Skymount Prefecture, as far as Linley was concerned, held no dangers or challenges. Although, according to legends, the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture was fairly powerful...

Compared to a Paragon, he was still much weaker!

This was a trip for Linley, Bebe, Olivier, and Deia. Deia was only a Saint. Although they hadn’t planned to bring him alone, Deia himself had steadfastly insisted on going. His mother was at Skymount Prefecture, after all!

And thus, Olivier had asked Linley his opinion on whether or not they should bring Deia alone...and Linley, being completely confident, had nodded and permitted Olivier to bring Deia.

“Let’s go. We will be able to reach Skymount Prefecture in under a year.” Linley smiled, and then, in midair, an enormous black sword-shaped metallic lifeform appeared.

Linley’s group of four immediately entered the metallic lifeform.

Under Linley’s control, the metallic lifeform slashed through the skies, transforming into a black blur as it disappeared into the horizons of the Skyrite Mountains and flew towards the east.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 9,

Bonin

In the air above Skymount Prefecture. A black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform was hovering there.

Linley, Olivier, and the other two were standing at the front cabin within the metallic lifeform, staring through the translucent metal to the mountains ahead of them.

“Right. The Yustone Mountains are up ahead!” Olivier’s eyes were shining.

While flying here, Olivier had been astonished at the speed of Linley’s metallic lifeform. Within one short year, they had actually arrived at Skymount Prefecture from Indigo Prefecture. What he didn’t understand... was that when Linley had gone from Tartarus of the Nether Sea to the Abyssal Mountain, a distance of tens of billions of kilometers, he had spent less than ten years travelling.

“Describe Diana’s appearance to me.” Linley said.

Olivier nodded. “Diana is slightly shorter than me, standing roughly up to my eyebrows. She has straight, shoulder-length hair which is a deep jade color, almost black. Within the castle inside the Yustone Mountains, she is the mistress. Finding her should be easy.”

“Right.” Linley nodded.

At the same time, the metallic lifeform disappeared, and Linley’s group of four stood there in midair, with Olivier holding his son, Deia, by the hand.

“Wait momentarily.” Linley willed his divine sense to spread out, instantly encapsulating nearly half of the entire Yustone Mountains, which naturally included that castle.

In the castle, there were 1556 individuals, mostly men, with a few women.

As for someone like Olivier had described, a woman with shoulder-length hair that was deep green, there was only one!

Within the castle. The balcony of a small room. A woman was staring into the distance, dressed in an ink-jade dress. She was the mistress of this castle...Diana!

“Leya, my child...mother is so sorry.” Diana said softly, a hint of sadness in her eyes.

Ever since that day more than ten years ago, when Olivier had attacked the castle and informed her of Leya’s death, Diana began to hate Bonin all the more! Originally, she hated Bonin for tearing her apart from her family, but now, she hated Bonin for not honoring his promise and for attacking her sons and husband, resulting in Leya’s death.

“How could it have come to this? Why did all of this have to happen?” Diana shut her eyes, tears rolling down her face.

Right at this moment...

“Are you Olivier’s wife, Diana?” A voice rang out in Diana’s mind.

Diana was startled, and she hurriedly opened her eyes.

“Who is it?” Diana hurriedly looked around, but she was unable to see a single possible ‘suspect’. And then, that voice continued, “Don’t worry or be suspicious. I am Olivier’s friend. He invited me to take you out of here.”

Diana continued to stare around herself, but wasn’t able to find the person who was sending her the message. She calmed down, then responded, “Right, I am Diana! But...I cannot leave.”

“Cannot leave?”

“Right. If I were to leave, then the lord of this castle, Bonin, would definitely kill Olivier and our son.” Diana said.

“He doesn’t have that ability.” That calm, yet assured voice echoed in her mind.

Diana wanted to say something else, but suddenly, a raucous series of noises could be heard from the distance. Diana couldn’t help but stare towards the distant disturbance, confused. She saw a group of guards fly out from the walls of the castle, with one shouting rebukingly, “This is Castle Yustone. If you want to enter the castle, wait for us to send a message first!”

The shouts rang out repeatedly, and some people even pulled out divine artifacts as they flew over to block the newcomers.

But the four blurs didn’t hesitate at all, flying straight past.

“Olly...and Deia?” Diana opened her eyes wide, stunned.

Linley’s group of four flew past in awe-inspiring fashion, completely ignoring the blocking guards. Most of those guards were Gods, and only a few were Highgods. A gust of earthen yellow energy rippled past them, and it seemed as though those guards were like pellets of sand, carried away by the waves of the sea. All of them were knocked flying.

“Eh?” Diana couldn’t help but feel surprised.

The other guards of Yustone Castle were all stunned as well.

“Milord, those four are too powerful. We aren’t able to stop them.” Those guards hurriedly reported to a black-robed man.

The black-robed man’s face changed. “Olivier!” Last time, Olivier had secretly snuck in, and then battled with Bonin. Many of the people at Yustone Castle thus recognized Olivier. The black-robed man ordered, “Hurry up and find the master of the castle. He is elsewhere in the Yustone Mountains. Hurry and find him.”

“Yes, milord.”

Immediately, twenty nearby guards flew out of Yustone Castle in search of Bonin.

“The four of you, please halt.” The black-robed man called out in a clear voice.

At the same time, many of the guards gathered together behind the black-robed man as he flew towards Linley’s group of four. In addition, a large amount of guards continued to fly out from places throughout the castle, wishing to block Linley’s advance.

“Rumble...”

Linley's group of four flew forward, and it was like a mountain was sweeping through. All of the guards who wanted to block them were knocked flying backwards by waves of earthen yellow energy. Linley's group of four...was completely unstoppable!

Seeing this, the black-robed man's face became exceedingly ugly to behold. He could tell...that the enemies were powerful indeed.

"Unless you want to die, stay away." Bebe called out smugly in a loud voice.

"The four of you, if you advance any further, then I will attack." The black-robed man said in a clear voice. Although he spoke quite boldly, after having seen Linley's power...the black-robed man knew very well that if these enemies wanted to kill them, it would be simplicity itself. After all, killing Highgods was very easy, but to do what Linley had done, to knock them backwards without injuring them...that was quite difficult.

Linley's group of four flew directly for Diana.

Diana stared as these four flew over, the castle guards completely unable to stop them. She couldn't help but feel stunned.

"Mother." Deia was the first to call out as he flew towards Diana. Olivier flew over alongside him as well.

"Deia." Diana's eyes instantly turned red. She hurriedly went over and tightly hugged her son. Although her son was already an adult now, that familiar spiritual aura...Diana instantly recognized him.

"Diana." Olivier said softly.

Diana turned to look at Olivier. She couldn't help but throw herself into Olivier's arms. These two, husband and wife, felt both excited and heartsick.

Linley stood there in midair. Bebe, seeing this, couldn't help but smile.

"Olly, why did you come back?" Diana raised her head, looking at Olivier. She said frantically, "Last time, when you came, it was because you didn't know how powerful Bonin was. And Bonin is very tyrannical...you were lucky to be able to escape last time. This time, you...alas!" Diana was very worried.

Bonin was extremely powerful, after all. And behind him was the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture.

"Don't worry." Olivier revealed a smile.

"Mother, don't worry. We have Uncle Linley." Deia urged as well. That cold, emotionless youth, upon seeing his mother, seemed to have become a child again.

"Linley?" Diana raised her head, looking at the distant Linley and Bebe in confusion. "You mean them?"

"Right." Olivier smiled and nodded.

"But Bonin has his father, who is terrifying. He isn't just the Lord Prefect of the Skymount Prefecture, he is also a Sovereign's Emissary with a Sovereign artifact. He is extremely powerful." Diana said hurriedly. The Infernal Realm had 108 Lord Prefects, but not all of them had a Sovereign artifact.

Olivier couldn't help but laugh as he reflected on Linley's power.

A Sovereign artifact?

Even an expert with three Sovereign artifacts, much less one, was no match for a Paragon. The Paragon might not be able to kill such a person, but would still be able to drive that person into chaotic space.

“Uncle Linley is a Paragon.” Deia said hurriedly.

“Pa, Paragon?” Diana blinked, stunned. She was completely stunned by this word, ‘Paragon’. Paragon...these were legendary figures who represented invincibility amongst Deities!

“Diana, where is that bastard, Bonin?” Olivier’s eyes had a savage light in them as he spoke.

“He...” Diana was somewhat hesitant, but she still answered. “He went to gather bloodmist flowers. He should still be within the Yustone Mountains.”

“Bloodmist flowers? What’s that?” Olivier didn’t understand.

“There’s nothing special about them. They are just a type of flower.” Diana clearly didn’t want to discuss it. “Forget about that. We need to go find Bonin, but the Yustone Mountains are so large. How can we find him?” The divine sense of a Highgod only stretched to a thousand meters or so. To rely on it to search an entire vast mountain range was indeed impractical.

Linley, hovering there in midair, finally spoke. “Olivier, I’ve already found that Bonin fellow.”

Diana, Deia, and Olivier all stared at Linley, astonished.

“The castle guards have already located Bonin...” Linley laughed calmly. He had noticed the conversation between that squad of guards and Bonin, and so naturally he knew which one Bonin was, now. Actually...it was easy to tell who Bonin was. This was because although there were quite a few people within the Yustone Mountains, Bonin was travelling with ten subordinates, all Highgods.

In the Yustone Mountains, most likely only Bonin alone would be able to do such a thing.

“Follow me.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

Olivier immediately led Diana and Deia to follow as Linley and Bebe flew out of the castle. As for the maids and guards of the castle, all they could do was watch as the mistress of the castle left. They weren’t able to do a thing about it.

In a separate region of the Yustone Mountains.

Bonin was a big fellow, with a back as muscular as a tiger’s and a waist as thick as a bear’s. He was nearly two meters tall, and his face was fairly handsome. He had thick black eyebrows and a pair of energetic, lively eyes. Currently, Bonin was holding a flower in his hand. This flower seemed rather blurry, while at the same time it had a hint of red color swirling about it.

The bloodmist flower was a very pretty type of flower. But of course, it had no practical use, save for being admired aesthetically.

“What did you say?” Bonin’s face changed.

“Master, that man named Olivier, he came back. And he brought someone!” The guard said hurriedly. “The person he brought is very powerful. All those guards were unable to stop him. We could only watch as he stormed into the castle. Per orders from his lordship, we came to notify you, master!”

“Bastard!” A savage light appeared in Bonin’s eyes. “That useless piece of trash. I spared his life last time. Who would’ve thought that instead of being smart enough to f*ck off, he would actually return.”

“Follow me.” Bonin gave the order.

“Master.” The leader of Bonin’s personal guard, a white-browed, grim looking man, said hurriedly, “Last time, Olivier saw your power, and yet this time, he dares return. Clearly, he is prepared for you. The guards just now also said that all the guards of the castle combined were unable to stop them...this person’s power is most likely comparable to a Lord Prefect’s. If you go, the repercussions...”

Bonin couldn’t help but come to a halt.

He clenched his fists, and the stalk of the bloodmist flower in his hand was twisted as well.

“Can it be that I’m supposed to just watch as someone takes my wife away?” Bonin said frantically.

“Master, your life is more important. As for the mistress, she...let’s go find the Lord Prefect and then come up with an idea.” The guard urged.

But right at this moment...

“Don’t try to talk him out of it. It is too late for that.” A calm voice echoed in everyone’s mind.

“Hm?” Bonin’s face changed dramatically, and he raised his head, staring into the distance.

Five figures flew over at high speed. Bonin instantly recognized Diana and Olivier. Diana and Olivier were currently holding hands, appearing quite intimate. Upon seeing this, Bonin couldn’t suppress his rage from building. His face turned red, and his eyes began to blaze as he pointed into air and howled, “Olivier, release my wife!”

“Your wife?” Olivier was so furious that his eyes were filled with a ferocious light as well.

“Nana.” Bonin roared angrily. “All these years, have I ever been the slightest bit disrespectful to you? Why are you always like this...I’ve always done whatever you wanted, and I’ve always given you whatever you wanted! You wanted to see bloodmist flowers, so I personally led my people to search the entire mountain range for bloodmist flowers! But you...”

Diana was stunned, but then she replied in a cold voice, “Bonin. I...am Olivier’s wife. Not yours! Also, you sent people to kill Leya...do you think I could possibly forgive you after that?”

“But, but you and I were married first!” Bonin roared back angrily.

Diana shook her head, saying nothing further.

Bonin lowered his head, looking at the bloodmist flower. He had searched the entire mountain range for this flower, all because he wanted to coax Diana and make her happy. When he finally found the flower, he had been longing to bring it back and see her smile.

“Haha, women...haha...” Bonin began to laugh from sheer rage.

“I...my heart is dead towards you, now!” Bonin stared fixedly at Diana and Olivier. “So the two of you are quite close to each other, eh? Then I...I will let you two die together!”

“BANG!”

Bonin’s body began to emit a black aura.

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The aura of black energy swirled around Bonin, making him look like a savage fiend.

Bonin suddenly leapt forward, and the ground beneath him instantly split apart, with a deep crevice in the earth appearing beneath where his feet had been. Rocks and sand flew everywhere, while Bonin himself charged forward lightning-fast towards Linley's group of four. A long black spear appeared in Bonin's hand, and his long spear shot out like a giant python that was ravenously attempting to devour Linley's group.

Bonin's eyes were bloodshot, and he was filled with a murderous intent.

The adamantine heavy sword appeared in Linley's hand. An earthen yellow aura swirled around it, and quite casually, Linley swept it towards Bonin. Although his movements seemed slow, the adamantine heavy sword's speed was actually several times faster than that of the long spear, and it struck Bonin directly on his body.

“WHAP!”

Bonin, who had been charging upwards, was knocked down to the ground, smashing against rocky mountain and shattering it.

“Impossible.” Bonin looked at Linley, stunned. And this, his face steadied. Letting out a deep growl, he sent the long spear in his hand flying towards Linley...

“Swish!”

A translucent ripple shot out from the long spear towards Linley.

From the center of Linley's forehead, an extremely minute Voidwave Sword ripple shot out, effortlessly shattering that translucent spear ripple attack. However, because the Voidwave Sword was too small, after destroying that translucent spear ripple, it too collapsed.

The nearby Bebe gave Linley a puzzled glance. “Boss' soul is incredibly strong. When he uses his own spiritual energy, the effect is more than ten times more powerful than when he uses Sovereign's Might. When infused with his Will...although it might be a bit weak in terms of profound mysteries, the soul attacks of my Boss isn't much weaker than the likes of Magnus. To kill someone like Bonin is simplicity itself. So why is it that Boss intentionally spared him?”

Bebe had been with Linley for far too long. He knew exactly how powerful Linley was.

If that Voidwave Sword ripple had been just slightly larger, it would have killed Bonin. But Linley had chosen not to do so.

“Not good.” Those guards all grew very tense.

But they were clearly far too weak. They couldn't even compete against Bonin, much less challenge Linley.

“Haha...” Seeing the situation, Bonin began to laugh wildly. “No wonder, no wonder! So you two adulterers managed to invite such a powerful expert to help out. Most likely, even amongst Lord Prefect level experts,

this person would be ranked quite highly. Haha, if you want to kill me, then kill me. To die in the hands of an expert like you isn't shameful!"

Bonin actually stopped fighting.

"Eh?" Linley was rather surprised.

But as soon as Bonin's words came out...

"Whoosh!" He suddenly dove into the ground, fleeing so fast that even Linley was somewhat surprised. This was because the speed at which Bonin moved was actually even faster than the speed at which he had attacked just now. Linley secretly sighed in praise. "This Bonin seemed to have gone berserk, but he actually is quite the schemer."

Linley was in no rush, instead simply descending.

Linley's left foot stepped heavily onto the ground. "Rumble..." An invisible rippling surge of power spread out through the ground. Bonin who was currently fleeing for his life at high speed underground, wasn't able to dodge at all. This invisible ripple grew larger and larger, until it finally struck him!

"Bang!" Bonin's body trembled, and he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood.

Linley himself disappeared, then reappeared right next to Bonin. It was Worldwalking!

"You won't be able to escape." Linley stretched his hand out, grabbing Bonin by the shoulder, then charging upwards, preparing to leave the underground.

"Hmph." Bonin sent his longspear stabbing towards Linley's chest.

"Clang." A ripple spread out from Linley's body. The spear thrust didn't harm Linley at all.

"This...how is this possible?" Bonin's face changed dramatically.

He was still a Six Star Fiend, and one who was using Sovereign power. Linley didn't use any sort of armor at all, and yet, the defense he was using formed from divine earth power alone was able to block the blow. This was too terrifying.

"Even your father would be unable to harm me, much less you." Linley gave Bonin a calm glance while at the same time dragging Bonin aboveground.

Defenses infused with Will were quite frightening indeed. Even Linley wasn't able to kill Magnus, and was only able to drive him into chaotic space. From this, one could imagine how powerful that sort of defense was.

Linley's Will was even more powerful than the will of Magnus. Although he was somewhat weaker when it came to defensive profound mysteries, he wasn't that much weaker. It was indeed as Linley had said; the energy defense he created was impenetrable to Lord Prefect level experts. Linley could let them attack freely, and they still wouldn't be able to do anything to him.

"He...who is he?" Bonin was now completely stunned.

This sort of power was too vast. He was like a tiny creek who had encountered a vast, endless ocean. He no longer had any thoughts of fighting back.

Linley tossed Bonin towards the ground, sending him flying towards Olivier and Diana.

Bonin, who had been feeling dispirited, instantly was once more enraged upon seeing Olivier and Diana. He rose to his feet, wanting to charge forward and attack again. Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but frown. He stretched his hand out...and immediately, 108 rays of earthen yellow light flew out, surrounding and trapping Bonin within them.

A spherical prison was formed, with Bonin crushed inside it.

"Aaaaaaaaah!" Bonin bellowed ferociously, wanting to burst it apart.

"It is useless." Linley said calmly. "You are a Six Star Fiend. Even using Sovereign power, you are unable to escape."

Originally, this technique only had a compressive effect, but Linley had changed it and combined it with his Blackstone Prison ability. The spherical prison, aside from possessing a powerful compressive effect, also created an energy cage that was extremely tough to break. There was no way for a person to escape.

"So a day like this came for even you, Bonin." Diana said angrily.

"Father, kill him and avenge my older brother." Deia said frantically.

The corners of Olivier's eyes were twitching, and he angrily walked towards Bonin.

Bonin, trapped in the cage, began to bellow. "Diana, have I, Bonin, ever mistreated you? Whatever you wanted, I gave you. Whatever you disliked about me, I changed! In order to make you happy, I was willing to lower my head and bend the knee to my father, and ask to borrow money from him so that I could buy whatever you wanted! Diana, tell me, tell me...why did you betray me?!?"

Diana just stared at him coldly.

"Haha, you left our home, and I searched the entire world for you. This Bloodridge Continent is an enormous place, and by the time I found you, I saw that you had actually gotten married to this useless piece of garbage named Olivier. And you had children?" Bonin was so angry, he was laughing. "I didn't kill you. I took you back home, and I tried to coax you to come back to me, to change your mind. But you?" Bonin was in an utterly berserk state now.

"When we married, did I force you into it? You married me willingly!" Bonin bellowed with rage.

Diana stared furiously at Bonin. "Bonin, yes, I did agree to marry you, but what did you do? You kept on taking a fancy to other women, and you'd bring them back. And...you didn't even spare my little sister! Before marrying you, you had me completely fooled, but after marrying you, I saw what type of person you truly are. Of course I was going to leave. The farther I could go, the better!"

Bonin looked like a caged, berserk tiger. His eyes flashed with ferociousness.

"Right. I took a fancy to those women, but that was just out of lust, understand!?" Bonin howled angrily. "So what if I, Bonin, took a fancy to some women and snatched them, bringing them back to serve me? I only had a single wife! I wasn't like my father and those others, who married multiple women. I only had one wife. You! As for those other women, that was just lust. Understand?! Look at those women! Did I keep any of them for more than a month? Is it wrong for me to be a bit lusty?"

"You are too domineering and tyrannical." Diana shook her head. "You feel that you did nothing wrong, but I can't accept what you did. Especially the way you treated my little sister."

"Fine, I admit it, I'm domineering and tyrannical!" Bonin laughed angrily. "But after I brought you back this time, I didn't touch another woman again, right?"

“Too late.”

Diana said coldly. “Just because you didn’t touch any women this time didn’t mean that what you did in the past didn’t happen. I’ve already seen through you. And what makes me the angriest...is that when I agreed to go back with you, you said that you would spare Olly and my two children. But in reality?”

“Haha...”

Bonin laughed loudly, savagery flashing in his eyes. “Spare them? My woman was together with another man, and even had children with him. You tell me. Could I possibly let that man live and let those two spawns of sin live? Nobody can touch that which belongs to me. If someone does, I’ll make sure he dies!!!”

The black aura had already disappeared from Bonin’s body. His Sovereign’s Might had been used up.

Linley dispelled the prison part of his technique, leaving behind only the compressive power. This pure compressive power alone was enough to bind Bonin.

Olivier walked forward coldly. “Bonin, you killed my son, Leya. Today, you will pay with your life.” Olivier didn’t waste any words, and that mystic icesword appeared in his hands.

“Kill me?” Bonin snickered as he looked at Olivier. “Come then. Let me tell you something, Olivier! I, Bonin, always have a backup plan. The body I have been keeping at Yustone Castle is just one of several. My other bodies aren’t even here; they are training in seclusion. It is no big deal if you kill one of my divine clones. There will come the day when I will let you know...what the consequences for angering me are!”

Bonin looked towards Diana. “Diana...you whore, since you are determined to leave me, then I’ll tell you this...there will come the day when I will destroy you, I swear it! I will personally destroy you!”

Diana, hearing this, couldn’t help but feel her heart tremble.

Olivier just stared coldly at Bonin. In an emotionless voice, he said, “Destroy her? If you have the ability to do so, then have your other divine clones come over. I’ll be waiting for you.”

“Fine. I’ll come find you.” Bonin had a man-eating look in his eyes.

As for Olivier, his gaze was as cold as his sword.

“I’ll be respectfully awaiting your arrival at all times. Today, though, I’ll first destroy this clone.” Olivier finished his words, and then stabbed out with his mystic icesword. The compressed Bonin was completely unable to fight back. In reality, without the aid of Sovereign power, Bonin wasn’t a match for Olivier at all.

A sword pierced through Bonin’s skull.

Bonin’s eyes dimmed.

“This is indeed just one of Bonin’s divine clones. His other divine clones are not present.” Olivier realized, through divine sense, that only a single divine spark was knocked out.

Linley and Bebe just watched these events occur. In their minds, they sighed.

Who was right? Who was wrong?

From Bonin’s perspective, he was indeed sincere in his love towards Diana. But there was nothing that could be done; Diana’s feelings for him were dead. As Bonin saw it, it was Olivier who had taken his wife. Of course he had to kill him.

But from Olivier's perspective, he and Diana loved each other and had children together. Their calm, blissful life was destroyed; Bonin had stolen his wife and killed his son. Of course Olivier had an irreconcilable hatred for Bonin.

As for Diana, she wasn't able to stand Bonin any longer and had left him in search of a new life. But Bonin had then killed her son.

Who was in the right? Who was in the wrong?

"Olivier, where is Leya buried?" Diana asked. "I want to see him." Leya's death had been a huge blow to Diana.

"Alright." Olivier nodded.

"Then let's go." Linley and Bebe immediately led Olivier's family of three into the metallic lifeform, then departed. Only, this time, they didn't head back to Indigo Prefecture, instead first paying a visit to the place where Leya had been buried. Linley didn't kill the members of Bonin's personal guard either.

"Master..." The guards had watched everything happen without being able to resist.

The white-browed leader of the guards furrowed his brows...

Skymount Prefecture. Blackcloud Mountains.

The Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture lived here. The prefectural soldiers stationed here numbered in the millions.

"Lord Prefect, young master Bonin's most powerful divine clone has died." The white-browed man suddenly appeared here. Actually, he also played the role of message relay, and would often inform the Lord Prefect about what was happening to Bonin.

The Lord Prefect, who had been seated, suddenly rose to his feet, his eyes flashing savagely. "He died. And what did you do?"

"Lord Prefect, that person was too powerful." Terrified, the white-browed man fell to his knees.

In terms of being domineering and tyrannical, this Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture was even more terrifying than his son. The white-browed man was terrified that, in his rage, the Lord Prefect would kill him.

"Tell me what happened." The Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture growled.

"Yes, Lord Prefect. That day, young master Bonin..." The white-browed man began to explain in detail. He even gave a rough description of the 'battle' between Linley and Bonin. Listening to this, the Lord Prefect began to frown deeply. After the white-browed man finished speaking, he gave the order while frowning, "Oh, left after boarding a black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform? Fine. Per my orders, every single intelligence agent within Skymount Prefecture needs to be on watch. If any of them find a black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform fly past them, especially one with five individuals inside, they must report it."

"Yes." The white-browed man, upon hearing this, instantly understood that the Lord Prefect was going to take revenge.

But the white-browed man felt puzzled. "After hearing what I said, the Lord Prefect should understand how terrifying that person was. Why is it that he still dares to seek revenge?"

From watching that earlier battle, the white-browed man was able to guess...

That the brown-haired man's strength should be ranked amongst the top-tier Lord Prefects. The Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture shouldn't be confident in his ability to win.

After the white-browed man departed, the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture waved his sleeves, and a surge of Destruction-type divine power swept out, closing the door.

"Bonin. This child is too arrogant and solitary. He never listens to me. I had wanted to let him go out and adventure a bit, but who would have imagined...ugh..." A faint, baleful aura appeared on his face. "Bonin's most powerful divine clone is dead. His future is now uncertain! Hmph, you killed my son...hmph, a thousand years ago, I would've had to just let this stand. But now...I want to see who did it!" The Lord Prefect hesitated a moment, then waved his hand...

A jade green box appeared in his hand.

He opened the box, which had a sheet of green paper within it. Atop the sheet of paper, there was a bracelet, and atop the bracelet there were nine green beads inlaid into it.

The Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture looked at the bracelet. He couldn't help but take a deep breath, and then his eyes began to glow.

"It is time to use it." The Lord Prefect placed the bracelet on his right arm.

Upon wearing this bracelet, it seemed as though the Lord Prefect's very aura had changed.

The Lord Prefect pondered for a moment, and then his body divided into two. One had long black hair, while the other had long silver hair. The one with long silver hair took the jade green box, storing it away, then left the room through the door. As for the Lord Prefect with long black hair, this one remained standing within the room.

"Once I use this..."

The Lord Prefect with black hair frowned. Instantly, the Lord Prefect with silver hair who was already next to the door came to a halt. He retrieved the jade green box, removing that slip of green paper from within it.

"Crackle..." A surge of terrifying energy emanated from his palms.

The green paper trembled momentarily, but didn't shatter.

"It is hard for even me to destroy this sheet of paper." The silver-haired Lord Prefect waved his hand and retrieved an interspatial ring, bound it with blood, then stored the green sheet of paper into the interspatial ring.

"Hmph." Applying a bit of force, he crushed the interspatial ring with his fingers.

That sheet of paper was gone now.

"Haha...from today onwards, no one else will know this secret." The silver-haired Lord Prefect laughed as he left. As for the black-haired Lord Prefect, he lowered his head to look at the bracelet around his arms, then smiled slightly.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 11, The Lord Prefect of Skymount

The black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform sped through the skies of the Infernal Realm.

Within the metallic lifeform, Linley's group of five was seated around a table.

"Linley, the reason Diana and I are able to be together once more is all because of you. Thank you." Olivier raised his cup of wine, then took a sip.

"Haha..." The nearby Bebe laughed loudly. "Olivier, on the way over to Skymount Prefecture, I never saw you truly smile a single time. Even if you did smile, it seemed quite forced. But now it seems...you are smiling so widely, your eyes have turned into slits." Bebe teased him intentionally.

Olivier, hearing this, just laughed and glanced back at the nearby Diana. The two, husband and wife, glanced at each other. It was quite sweet.

Linley, seeing this, couldn't help but laugh as well, but suddenly he then frowned.

"How irritating!" Bebe let out a dissatisfied mutter as well.

Olivier, who was in an excellent mood, just laughed. "Don't worry about them. Our metallic lifeform is flying through the air, and the Infernal Realm is filled with countless bandits. It is very normal for them to use their divine sense to investigate us. Although they are rather irritating, there's nothing we can do about it. What, are we supposed to go out and chastise them, one by one?"

Just now, a divine sense had swept through the metallic lifeform.

The Infernal Realm did indeed have countless bandits. Although this sort of thing happened quite often, each time one was scouted out through divine sense, one would still feel rather uncomfortable.

"Hmph, all those bandits dare to do is to scout us out. Upon discovering that we are Highgods, they no longer dare make trouble for us." Bebe said disdainfully.

"Olivier." Linley said. "How much farther are we from that place you spoke of?" This trip they were making was to the place where Olivier's eldest son, Leya, had died. Her son had died, but Diana had yet to go see his grave. How could she feel at ease unless she went?

Olivier let out a sigh. "Soon. Given the speed at which this metallic lifeform that you control flies at, Linley, most likely in just five or six days, we will arrive. Linley...when the time is right, lessen the speed. I want to take a good look as well, as I need to verify the location. That place was in a mountain, after all."

"Don't worry. We were in a hurry to get to the Skymount Prefecture, but there's no need for us to be in a hurry on our return." Linley laughed calmly.

Linley had been planning to go to the Divine Light Plane, but after Beirut arranged for that message to be delivered to him, Linley temporarily gave up that notion.

Within the vast, boundless mountain range, there were two figures who were standing atop a mountain.

“A black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform, with five people inside, one a Saint. That’s right, the one that just flew past.” One of them, a man with short golden hair, stared towards the direction the metallic lifeform had flown. The bald youth next to him laughed, “This matches perfectly with the report that was sent to us by the communications squad earlier. However, this metallic lifeform flies quite fast. The last report came from tens of millions of kilometers away. It’s only been two short days since that report. On average, this means they are able to travel ten million kilometers or so each day.”

This speed truly was stunning.

After all, for most metallic lifeforms, travelling even a million kilometers a day was impressive.

What they didn’t know...was that this rate of ten million kilometers a day wasn’t even Linley going all out. In addition, this metallic lifeform was just an ordinary one, not a high level one.

“Given how fast it is moving, this metallic lifeform must be an extremely high level one. In addition, the controller of it must be extremely powerful.” The intelligence agent came to this conclusion.

While tracking Linley’s movements, they continued to immediately report back to their headquarters.

Their headquarters then transmitted this information to each of the other outposts.

Linley’s journey was being tracked.

A solitary, sickle-shaped black metallic lifeform was hovering in the air above a mountain range.

Within the metallic lifeform.

The black-haired Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture was standing at the front, staring through the translucent metal to the land ahead of him. Three people were standing respectfully by his side, one of whom was the white-browed man.

“Hm? Based on your calculations, didn’t you say that this group should be passing through this location?” The Lord Prefect said coldly.

One of the three men by his side, a silver-haired elder, bowed and said, “Lord Prefect. Based on the projected trajectory of this group, they should indeed pass by this location. In addition, not too long ago, a report came from an intelligence agent that the metallic lifeform was headed in this direction.”

“But I don’t see them.” The Lord Prefect gave him a sideways glance.

The silver-haired elder couldn’t help but tremble, then hurriedly said respectfully, “Lord Prefect, don’t worry. Even if they changed their arc slightly, given our many intelligence agents, we will definitely discover them.”

“Lord Prefect.” Right at this moment, the white-browed man suddenly spoke.

The Lord Prefect couldn’t help but glance at him, and the white-browed man immediately bowed and said, “Lord Prefect, I suddenly thought of something.”

“Speak!” The Lord Prefect said calmly.

“Lord Prefect...in the past, young master Bonin sent people to pursue and kill that ‘Olivier’ and his two children. Back then, the warriors that were sent out managed to encounter Olivier within a few hundred thousand kilometers of this location. In that battle, all of the warriors died. However, they also killed one of Olivier’s children! Now that Diana and Olivier are together once again, and given that Diana has never gone to visit her dead son, I think...she might perhaps be going now?” The white-browed man said.

Actually, after Linley and Olivier had killed Bonin, Diana had spoken aloud regarding her desire to go visit the place where her son had been killed. Although the white-browed man and the guards were fairly far away from Diana, they were still able to make out her words.

But the white-browed man also understood...that if he immediately provided this information to the Lord Prefect, and they went there to set up a trap, like a hunter waiting for a rabbit, and then Linley's group changed their plans for some reason...the Lord Prefect would probably, in his rage, kill the white-browed man after waiting in vain!

For him to now bring it up, however, meant that he was rendering a great merit!

For the sake of his life, he had to choose to act this way.

"Oh?" The Lord Prefect, hearing this, immediately felt that this made sense.

When a mother's son died, of course the mother would want to go see him one more time. This made perfect sense.

"Excellent." The Lord Prefect nodded slightly towards the white-browed man. "Let us now go to the place where Diana's son died."

"Your subordinate will guide you." The white-browed man said respectfully.

"Mm."

The Lord Prefect was quite satisfied with the white-browed man's cleverness. That sickle-shaped metallic lifeform instantly pierced through the skies, moving like a giant wind knife as it flew towards the direction of the location where Olivier had battled against his enemies.

This nameless mountain range was quite vast in scope, and its peaks and valleys extended off into the distance.

Actually, the majority of mountain ranges in the Infernal Realm were far larger than the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts of the Yulan continent, and they had far more experts as well. But of course, in the eyes of Linley and Olivier, those so-called 'Demigods' and 'Gods' truly weren't worth mentioning.

Within one mountain gorge.

There was a lake of black-colored water, and at the sides of the lake, there was a tomb that was made from an enormous stone sculpture.

Olivier, Diana, and Deia were standing in front of this tomb. As for Linley and Bebe, they stood to one side.

"Leya, my son..." Diana couldn't help but kneel down, her tears flowing. That cold, distant youth, Deia, began to cry as well. The death of his elder brother was clearly something that had been etched deep into his memories.

Linley and Bebe looked at each other. They could do nothing but remain silent.

From the reactions of this family of three, Linley could sense how they must have all been on very close terms with each other. Diana truly did love Olivier and her children. "Perhaps Diana didn't like Bonin's type of person, and preferred this sort of warm, gentle home." Linley sighed to himself.

Olivier, Diana, Bonin...their story was indeed a tragedy.

Bonin's most powerful divine clone had died, but he had sworn to destroy Diana.

“Given Olivier’s abilities, I don’t need to worry about him.”

Linley couldn’t help but walk over to the side of the lake, and Bebe followed him. Bebe sent mentally, a bitter look on his face, “Boss, I feel quite depressed as well, seeming how saddened Olivier’s family is.”

“Let’s just wait over here.” Linley sent back.

A long time later.

“Linley, we’re fine now.” Olivier led his wife and son over. “Apologies. We made you wait quite a long time. Let’s return to Indigo Prefecture.”

“Right.” Linley nodded.

And then, Linley frowned and glanced off into the distance. He saw an enormous sickle-shaped metallic lifeform fly over at high speed. It looked like a giant wind knife, and was flying straight towards this gorge, so fast that it caused wild air currents to erupt, sending quite a few trees and branches flying everywhere within the gorge.

“Who is it?” Bebe frowned.

“Looking for us?” Linley mused to himself.

Since they had flown into the gorge, clearly they people inside were looking for them.

At this moment, Linley willed his divine sense to spread outwards, sending it into that sickle-shaped metallic lifeform to investigate within. “Oh, four Highgods! One of them, that grim, black-haired elder...that should be the Lord Prefect of Skymount, Molde [Mo’er’de].”

Linley had previously received a book from Beirut regarding the experts of the various planes. Molde was listed in that book.

“Can it be that Molde has come to avenge his son?” Linley sighed mentally. He sighed at how Molde was not amenable to reason. Although Linley had yet to use his full power, the power Linley had displayed at Yustone castle, and then yet again when Linley had dealt with Bonin, was at a level beyond that which ordinary Lord Prefects might be capable of.

Molde should have predicted that Linley’s true power was greater than this. Why was it that he still dared to come?

Was Molde very powerful?

Based on what Linley knew, though, although Molde was an Emissary of the Bloodridge Sovereign, and in possession of a Sovereign artifact, in terms of power, he was a good deal weaker than the likes of Reisgem, Hemmers, and the like.

“Linley, what’s going on?” Olivier walked over, worried.

“It is the Lord Prefect of Skymount, Molde.” Linley said softly. “No need to worry.”

“Him?” Hearing this, Diana was startled, but when she thought about how powerful Linley was, she relaxed.

The enormous metallic lifeform that had been hovering roughly ten meters above them suddenly vanished, revealing four individuals hovering there in midair. The leader, that black-haired elder, had a cold, hard face, and eyes that flashed like knives. Just by standing there, he gave off the aura of being an enormous, growling beast, prepared to attack at any moment.

On his right arm, he was wearing that bracelet, which had those nine green pearls studded into it.

“Eh? Carrying a bracelet?” Linley rarely saw people wearing bracelets. After all, when experts battled, they would generally wear some sort of armor, so a bracelet wouldn’t be of much use. Still, there was still a very small minority of people who wore them...some, because of ancestral customs; others, because of local styles. Others just liked them.

In short, Linley was slightly surprised, but then he paid no more mind to it.

The Lord Prefect of Skymount, Molde, swept Linley’s group with his cold gaze. He looked like a mighty lion staring at five little sheep. The white-browed man behind Molde bowed respectfully and said, “Lord Prefect, of the five, that man with long white-black hair is Olivier. It was he who killed young master Bonin. The most powerful person in that group, however, is that brown-haired man. It was he who bound the young master, giving Olivier the chance to kill him. I don’t know his name.”

Lord Prefect Molde of Skymount gave Olivier a glance, then turned to stare at Linley.

“Do you know that Bonin is my son?” Molde growled.

“I know.” Linley said calmly.

Molde’s aura was astonishing, but to Linley, he was like a small dog yipping and baring its fangs at a giant.

“Hey, you are that Lord Prefect ‘Molde’ of Skymount?” Bebe began to laugh. “We spanked the young one, and now the old one comes! The Boss and I are about to go back right now. If you don’t plan on doing anything, then beat it. If you want to get revenge for your son, then stop wasting our time and attack already. After dealing with you, we’ll need to hurry home. We’re in a rush!”

“Impudence!” Molde was focused on Linley; he held Bebe in no regard. But these words by Bebe instantly enraged him.

“Rumble...”

The air seemed to explode as Molde charged leisurely towards Bebe, his right hand forming a claw which slashed through the air, easily ripping space itself apart.

“Crackle...” The claw howled through the air as it struck.

Linley frowned slightly. Instantly, a blurry, indistinct figure appeared in front of Molde. At the same time, with a ‘bang!’ sound, Molde’s head was viciously kicked, and Molde himself was sent flying away by this kick, moving like a meteor as he smashed into the side of the mountain, several tens of meters away.

With a booming sound, a giant spiderweb of cracks appeared on the mountain side, with a large, human-shaped hole at the center of the spiderweb.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 12, Not Dead

“Haha, you old fart, what makes you think you can act so arrogantly?” Bebe bent over in laughter, clutching at his belly.

As for the three subordinates of Molde, they turned their heads, staring, stunned, at the human-shaped hole in the distant mountainside. Their Lord Prefect had actually been knocked flying in an instant?

“Rumble...” The mountainside trembled, and rocks fell everywhere. A human figure flew out, emerging from the mountainside, then landed on the ground of the gorge.

Molde's body wasn't damaged at all. His focused gaze fell on Linley, and he said in a low voice, “I didn't act against you, and yet you sneak-attacked me? Hmph...your speed isn't bad. But your power is a bit weak.”

Power, weak?

Linley knew that Molde was just engaging in braggadocio, because the Sovereign artifact Molde was in possession of was a defensive Sovereign artifact. Naturally, Linley wouldn't be able to kick him to death with one kick.

Molde knew very well that Linley's kick was extremely powerful, but he believed that Linley sneak-attacked him because Linley wasn't that much stronger than him. Even if Linley was a bit stronger, that was fine, because he was in possession of that miraculous bracelet. This bracelet filled him with boundless confidence.

“Let's not waste any more time. Go ahead and attack.” Linley was still smiling calmly, not feeling the slightest bit of concern or nervousness.

Molde frowned, his eyebrows turning steely. He laughed coldly, “Since you want to die, I'll grant you your wish.”

“Bang!” A surge of black light erupted out of Molde's body, exploding forth. It was Destruction-type Sovereign's Might! After using Sovereign power, Molde could sense power swelling in him, which made him feel all the more confident. Molde gave a confident, cold laugh, then suddenly moved.

He was like a bolt of black lightning...

“Haaargh!” Molde's right leg viciously chopped down towards Linley like a hatchet.

“Riiiiip.” Space itself was ripped apart by this kick, and wherever Molde's leg passed by, a terrifyingly large spatial tear appeared. Molde, being in possession of a defensive Sovereign artifact, could use his entire body as a weapon.

Linley just smiled, then charged forward, his body moving like an illusion.

“Die!” Molde's kick pierced directly through Linley's body, but in the instant that it did, Molde's face suddenly changed. “Wait, that's not his body!” Molde's guess was correct; that was just an after-image Linley had left behind after moving.

Linley's body was actually directly behind Molde.

Linley stretched out his hand, forming it into a claw as he grabbed directly at Molde's left leg.

"No!" Molde felt a terrifying power suddenly constrict around the joints of his left leg, and his face couldn't help but change.

"Your speed is too slow!" Linley's voice echoed out within the gorge, and as it did, Linley grabbed Molde by his left leg, then, like snapping a whip, sent Molde smashing against the ground! He whipped Molde into the ground time and time again, smashing him down viciously.

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

The floor of the valley trembled violently, as one giant, deep crater after another appeared. The collision force was so powerful that it even caused the rocky ground to transform into dust, down to a depth of ten meters or even deeper. Multiple enormous tears in the ground appeared, joining together and resulting in a terrifyingly deep crevice being formed.

"How can this be..." Linley's power wasn't held back at all. After having been whipped about lightning-fast like this, Molde was beginning to grow dizzy.

In an instant, Linley had smashed Molde into the ground more than a hundred times, and then, with a powerful sideways toss, he sent Molde flying, like a rock from a slingshot. Molde shot deep into the mountainside, creating yet another man-shaped hole.

The white-browed man and the other two watched, stupefied.

"Uncle Linley is so powerful." Deia's eyes were shining.

"He is indeed terrifyingly strong." Olivier's eyes were gleaming. He, too, was a person who sought perfection. Upon seeing the power that Linley had displayed, he too felt stunned.

"That, what's his name, Molde? I'm puzzled. What the hell was he thinking? He dared to fight my Boss? Although my Boss didn't reveal much of his power, the speed he displayed earlier should have made it so that Molde would've known to retreat." Bebe mumbled. "He just has a defensive Sovereign artifact. What is there for him to be smug about?"

Bebe was puzzled by the fact that Molde hadn't retreated.

"Bastard!" A furious bellow rang out from the mountainside. "BANG!" Molde once more charged out. After having been thrown about earlier, Molde's rage had risen to a breaking point. His eyes were scarlet, and he stared angrily at Linley while growling, "Punk, do you rely merely on speed alone? Hmph. That bit of attack power you have isn't able to wound me at all!"

Molde was growing frantic, but up till now...he still believed that Linley was just relying on his speed.

Linley's attacks weren't necessarily stronger than his.

"Oh?" Linley's face sank. "Since you want to die, don't blame me."

After reaching his current level of power, Linley would rarely act to kill ordinary commanders. This was because...for Linley to act against commanders would be an absolute massacre! It would be a form of abuse. Linley had simply wanted to teach Molde a lesson and have him f*ck off, but Molde seemed to be quite confident in his power. Linley couldn't help but begin to grow angry.

"Haha...if you are able to kill me, then do so!" Molde laughed wildly, and then, launching himself from the ground, he charged towards Linley, carrying the power of a mountain.

Molde's right hand was like a sword, piercing through space and shooting towards Linley.

"Whap!" Linley struck out, lightning-fast.

Fist against fist!

Molde was knocked flying back. After landing, he stared at Linley in disbelief. "You...how can you...you didn't use Sovereign's Might. How could you have blocked my punch?" Molde was very confident in his own strength, and he had also used a drop of Sovereign's Might. And yet, he was actually knocked flying back by Linley.

"Your punch? Compared to Hemmers, you are quite lacking." Linley said calmly.

"Hemmers?" Molde frowned, but then he seemed to think of something, as he began to laugh coldly. "Your power isn't bad. Then taste my soul attack."

Molde's face turned solemn, and then he opened his mouth...

"Swish!" A translucent ripple, shaped like a blade of wind, shot at high speed towards Linley.

"Die, then!" Linley no longer showed any mercy, and he growled as he attacked.

A single Voidwave Sword ripple shot out from Linley's body, the size of an ordinary longsword. It smashed onto that translucent wind blade, and with a 'bang', tore through it like rotting wood. The translucent wind blade disappeared, while Linley's Voidwave Sword ripple just decreased a small bit in size.

Molde's face changed dramatically. He seemed to want to say something, but it was too late.

The Voidwave Sword ripple silently and soundlessly entered Molde's body. Linley's most powerful type of attack was his soul attacks; even compared to a Paragon of Fate, he could be said to be on roughly the same level. How could an ordinary Lord Prefect possibly block Linley's soul attack?

Molde's body trembled, and then his gaze grew dim as he slowly collapsed.

"Lord Prefect..." The white-browed man and the other two were shocked. Their Lord Prefect...had died, just like that?

"This Molde didn't know his own limits. He really was seeking death." Bebe snorted.

Linley turned and walked towards Olivier and the others. Laughing calmly, he said, "Let's go!"

"Linley!" Olivier's face changed as he let out a cry of alarm, staring behind Linley, stunned.

"Hrm?" Linley turned his head, puzzled.

Lord Prefect Molde, who should have been dead, actually once more rose to his feet. His eyes were flashing as he stared at Linley, stunned. "You...who are you?"

Linley looked back at him, also stunned. "You didn't die?" Just now, he had clearly seen Molde be struck by his attack, and then collapse. His eyes had turned glassy and lifeless. How had he come back to life?

"Boss, this old fellow didn't die. That's odd." Bebe called out.

It was indeed quite odd. If Molde had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, then he shouldn't have reacted at all to Linley's soul attack. But just now, Molde had clearly collapsed, and yet, moments later, he had completely recovered and was completely fine. This was indeed bizarre.

“His soul attack is this powerful...and his material attacks are so strong as well...and he is so fast...he has no weaknesses at all.” Molde was stunned.

“You are a Paragon? Which Paragon of the Infernal Realm...” Molde said. Aside from Paragons, Molde couldn’t think of any other possibilities. “You are Mr. Linley?” Molde actually guessed the truth right away.

Truthfully, that wasn’t surprising. There were only three individuals in the Infernal Realm who were suspected of being Paragons.

Molde had acquired information on the other two long ago. As for Linley, he had just risen to prominence two centuries ago after the Planar War. The Infernal Realm was simply too vast, and so in the past two centuries, news about him hadn’t spread everywhere just yet. Although Molde had run into an old friend who had informed about Linley, all Molde had learned was Linley’s name, and the fact that he was a member of the Azure Dragon clan who was capable of Dragonforming.

As for Linley’s appearance, he had no idea.

“Yes, I am Linley.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Paragon Linley?” Molde’s three subordinates were utterly terrified as well. Their Lord Prefect had actually attempted to take revenge upon a Paragon. Wasn’t this suicide? They were stunned, but Molde was both stunned and enraged.

“That punk, Bonin, is just a Six Star Fiend. No matter how much trouble he causes, how could he have gotten a Paragon involved?” Molde was incomprehensibly angry and shocked. He knew that the enemy was fairly powerful, but Bonin was just a Six Star Fiend, after all. Molde believed...that at most, the enemy would be a Lord Prefect level expert. A Paragon? Using a Paragon to deal with his son was a waste of talent.

How few Paragons did the entire Infernal Realm have? Just three, and that was including Linley! How could there be such a coincidence?

If it had been Dunnington or the other one, Molde would have immediately recognized him and given up. Unfortunately, it just so happened to be Linley. Linley was a Paragon who had just recently risen to sudden prominence, and he didn’t have any accurate information about Linley at all.

His son had actually managed to offend a Paragon. Molde’s luck really was quite terrible.

“This...Mr. Linley...I apologize.” Molde forced out a smile. “Since it is you, Mr. Linley, then I’ll leave now.”

“Leave now? If my Boss was weak, he would’ve been killed by you, and the rest of us would have as well, right?” Bebe barked. “It’s too late for you to leave now!”

“I am quite curious. How is it that you were hit by my technique but didn’t die?” Linley looked at this Lord Prefect, Molde.

Molde’s face changed dramatically. Not hesitating at all, with a ‘swish’, he rose into the skies, intending to flee! Against a Paragon like Linley, even if Linley wasn’t able to kill him, he would be able to control a spatial tear and shove Molde into it. Molde didn’t believe that his Sovereign would waste any time or effort in entering chaotic space to save him.

Linley blinked, and two Voidwave Sword ripples shot towards Molde, who was in mid-flight.

No matter how fast he moved, how could he move faster than a soul attack?

The two Voidwave Sword ripples entered Molde's body, and instantly, Molde's formerly flying body became powerless. He once more fell down from the skies, smashing onto the ground. But just an instant later, Molde actually once more flipped to his feet.

"Queer. How queer." Linley began to laugh. "If you have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, you shouldn't feel a thing from my soul attack. But clearly, you don't have one. But if you don't have one, how could it be that you are able to survive repeated soul attacks from me?"

Linley didn't understand.

"Mr. Linley, no, Lord Linley!" Molde's face changed dramatically. He was confident in his ability to escape anyone besides a Paragon, but Paragons...they were strong in every aspect, without any flaws.

"It really is strange." Linley frowned, puzzled.

"Swish!" "Swish!"

Two more Voidwave Sword ripples shot out, once more entering Molde's body. Molde's eyes immediately became lifeless, and he once more fell onto the ground. This time, Linley used his divine sense to keep a close watch on Molde, carefully inspecting Molde for any changes. Linley's divine sense thoroughly filled every single part of Molde's body; it was extremely forceful and dominating.

Molde's eyes opened, and he once more regained consciousness.

"So that's how it is." Linley finally discovered where the secret lay.

"Lord Prefect..." The white-browed man and the other two, seeing the situation was turning grim, hurriedly fled, leaving behind only Molde himself.

After regaining consciousness, the first thing Molde saw was Linley walking towards him. His face changed dramatically, and he suddenly tunneled underground.

"Haha, you won't be able to escape."

Linley laughed loudly, and then his body suddenly appeared next to Molde, and he grabbed Molde by the shoulders.

Linley's other hand then grabbed at Molde's 'bracelet'. "No!" Feeling Linley grab the bracelet, the Lord Prefect of Skymount instantly grew frantic, but Linley gave his left hand a forceful tug, and with a 'crack', the bracelet shattered as the nine green pearls flew into Linley's hand.

"The reason why you were able to survive despite being hit by me multiple times has something to do with these nine soul pearls, yes?" Linley glanced at him.

Seeing that Linley held the soul pearls in his hand, the Lord Prefect's face instantly turned ashen.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 13,

The Secret of the Nine Pearls

“Boss, the reason why you weren’t able to kill him was these nine soul pearls? What are these nine soul pearls?” Bebe flew next to Linley as well, inspecting the nine soul pearls hovering in Linley’s hands with curiosity. “Boss, I don’t feel anything special about these nine pearls?”

Linley chuckled. “When I first saw the Lord Prefect of Skymount, I didn’t sense anything special about these soul pearls either; I thought that wearing a bracelet was just personal habit of his. Only when I tried to kill him multiple times with no success did I notice that these soul pearls were rather unique.”

How keen was Linley’s judgment now?

He was able to immediately tell, at a glance, that the Lord Prefect of Skymount’s bracelet wasn’t a divine artifact, and so Linley had taken it for a mere trinket with no value. And, indeed, the bracelet wasn’t a divine artifact. Linley was able to crush the bracelet with his fingers with ease. The truly valuable items were those nine soul pearls.

“Lord Prefect of Skymount, is my guess correct?”

“Lord Linley!” The Lord Prefect of Skymount’s face was ashen. He hurriedly said, “Correct. Your guess is correct. These nine soul pearls are a precious treasure that were naturally formed, and they contain an incomprehensible life force within them. As long as you are wearing these nine soul pearls, an inexhaustible, endless amount of life energy will fill your entire body and soul. Although your soul attack was powerful, Lord Linley, the energy of the soul pearls continuously protected me, and so even though my soul was damaged, it was quickly healed.”

Molde no longer had anything left he could rely on.

He had thought that by relying on his soul pearls, others wouldn’t be able to kill him. And Molde’s power was indeed quite great. Matching that with the soul pearls...meant that he could be considered one of the topmost commanders. This was why Molde had so confidently come to fight.

After seeing Linley’s unfamiliar face, he had felt all the more confident.

But who would have imagined...that this was Linley, the Paragon who had risen to sudden prominence in the Infernal Realm! A Paragon...they were the most powerful entities amongst Deities. The soul pearls could protect Molde, but they weren’t able to increase his attack power. In front of Linley, Molde was nothing more than a punching bag!

Now that he lost those nine soul pearls, he had nothing left at all.

“Oh, these soul pearls are so special?” Bebe mumbled in surprise.

“Molde. Did you bind these soul pearls?” Linley said calmly.

“No.” Molde said hurriedly.

Linley willed a drop of blood to emerge from his finger, which then flew towards one of the soul pearls hovering above his hand.

“Drip!”

The blood fell atop this jade green soul pearl, splattered, then rolled down and fell onto Linley’s palm.

“It actually didn’t go in?” Linley said with a frown.

“Lord Linley, these soul pearls are a miraculous treasure which was naturally formed by the heavens, rather than a divine artifact. There is no way to bind them with blood.” Molde said hurriedly. Linley gave Molde a sidelong glance, then held the nine soul pearls within his palm. Instantly, he felt a surge of unique energy fill his entire body. Under Linley’s control, this surge of energy even flooded into his soul.

Comfortable!

Linley felt as though his soul was being protected by this very unique type of energy.

“How curious. This sort of treasure...only the heavens themselves could give birth to such a thing.” Linley sighed in praise.

“Right. Right.” Molde hurriedly said.

“Boss, these soul pearls are quite unique, but how can you be certain that the reason why Molde was struck by your soul attack without dying was because of these pearls?” Bebe pursed his lips. “Perhaps the soul pearls are unique, but they aren’t necessarily the true treasure which protected Molde from dying. Perhaps he might have another treasure as well.”

Molde’s face changed dramatically.

“The best way to test it, Boss, is to give this Molde yet another soul attack. If this time, Molde dies, then that proves that it really was the soul pearls which were protecting him. If he doesn’t die, then it means he was lying.” Bebe laughed as he spoke, but in the eyes of Molde, Bebe’s laughter was so evil, so terrifying!

“Molde, what do you think? Is my reasoning correct?” Bebe looked at Molde and laughed, but he didn’t even attempt to hide the killing intent in his eyes.

These words were like the pronouncement of a death sentence upon Molde.

In terms of mentality, Bebe, a divine beast, still had a stronger desire to kill than Linley. Anyone who posed a threat to Linley or who had ever attacked Linley...as far as Bebe was concerned, such a person deserved death.

“Boss, if Molde doesn’t die, he will cause problems in the future, eventually. He is currently the Lord Prefect of Skymount, and won’t dare to take his revenge on you, Boss. That’s only because he isn’t strong enough. But if, one day, he were to make a breakthrough and become a Paragon, he probably would no longer fear you, Boss. Even if he isn’t able to take revenge on you, Olivier will be in danger.” Bebe sent mentally.

Bebe was farsighted. Anything that might pose a threat should be killed!

“Lord Linley...” Molde stammered in terror.

Molde’s current attitude was completely opposite to his earlier, brash, murderous attitude.

“When you thought you were strong, you attacked; when you discovered that the enemy was too strong, you submitted.” After having experienced the savagery of the Planar Wars, Linley wouldn’t be as soft-hearted as a woman. “Swish!” A Voidwave Sword ripple shot forth from Linley’s forehead, so fast that Molde wasn’t able to react at all as it drove into his body.

Molde's body trembled, and then the light disappeared from his eyes as he slumped down.

"Clink!" A blood-red set of armor fell out from his body onto the ground. This was his defensive Sovereign artifact.

"This time, he's really dead." Bebe laughed.

Olivier, Diana, and their son, 'Deia', walked over now. Olivier looked at the deceased Lord Prefect, then looked towards Linley with gratitude. "Linley, thank you. You helped me yet again." If the Lord Prefect didn't die, Olivier definitely would have been unable to rest easy.

"Thank you, Uncle Linley." Deia said as well, and then he gave the corpse of Molde a vicious look, as though placing the blame for the death of his older brother upon the Lord Prefect.

"When I dealt with Bonin, I prepared myself for the possible eventuality of having to deal with Molde as well. Only...I didn't expect that Molde would actually be in possession of this sort of miraculous natural treasure." Linley looked at the nine soul pearls in his hand and sighed.

"How unfortunate. Molde, as suspected, has clones somewhere." Bebe dripped a drop of blood onto the armor, but it didn't go in.

"Forget it. Just leave it there." Linley said with a calm laugh. "After having lost his most powerful divine clone, Molde is no longer much of a threat." Without his most powerful divine clone, even if Molde had a Saint-level clone somewhere who was able to fuse with a divine sparks all the way to the Highgod level, he wouldn't be able to make any more advances. This meant that there was no hope for Molde to reach the level of Paragons. Anyone not at the Paragon level, as far as Linley was concerned, could be slaughtered easily by him.

"Hmph. I'm not going to let him get anything back." Bebe waved his hand, drawing Molde's interspatial ring towards him, and then with a vicious clench and a 'crack', Bebe shattered the interspatial ring.

If he couldn't get it, he wouldn't let Molde get it either!

As for that Sovereign artifact...it was made by a Sovereign, and Bebe didn't dare do anything to it. Sovereigns wouldn't care about you killing an Emissary, as that was the fault of the Emissary for being too weak. But destroying a Sovereign artifact or tossing it into chaotic space? The Sovereign would be angered. The artifact was something which a Sovereign had spent a tremendous amount of time and effort on, after all.

"This treasure isn't bad, but it's not very useful for me." Linley glanced at the nine soul pearls.

"Let's go."

With a thought, Linley stored the nine soul pearls into his interspatial ring.

"We're off to Indigo Prefecture!" Bebe laughed. Olivier looked at his wife and son, then laughed as well, content. Linley's group of five once more boarded their metallic lifeform and began to fly at high speed towards Indigo Prefecture, in the west.

Within Linley's interspatial ring.

This was a lifeless space. A large number of items was hovering there within it, including that canteen filled with Sovereign's Might, the adamantine heavy sword, Bloodviolet, inkstones, azurite...and atop a little mountain formed from inkstones and azurite, there was a tattered, tarnished, unremarkable crown.

The tattered crown just lay there.

Suddenly...

The nine soul pearls appeared within that lifeless space. The nine crystalline jade-green soul pearls seemed so brilliant and beautiful.

The strange thing was, that tattered crown actually levitated into the air and flew towards the nine soul pearls, which also flew towards the tattered crown.

The nine soul pearls formed into a circle around the tattered crown.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

The nine soul pearls suddenly shot towards the tattered crown from each direction, instantly merging into the ‘settings’ of the crown. And then, everything turned calm again. A green light flowed atop the tattered crown, causing it to emanate a faint green aura. It was no longer as tattered and tarnished as it was before.

There were nine small settings and one large setting to this crown!

The nine small settings looped around the crown from front to back, while the center-front of the crown had a large, rhombus-shaped setting. This rhombus-shaped setting was completely empty.

Linley had no idea as to what had just happened within his interspatial ring. Previously, Linley had spent quite some time inspecting the tattered crown, and after becoming a Soul Mutate, Linley had inspected it yet again. But he couldn’t find anything special about it, and thus, he had tossed it into his interspatial ring and stopped paying attention to it.

Perhaps, one day, Linley would take out the crown or the pearls, only to discover the secrets of the crown.

But when would that happen? No one could say.

A metallic lifeform shaped like a vicious tiger floated there above the mountains. This enormous metallic lifeform had more than a hundred people within it, with the leader being a silver-haired, silver-robed Molde.

He was standing at the front of the metallic lifeform, staring through the translucent metal towards the distant mountains ahead.

“Go there and reclaim the armor.” The silver-haired Molde said coldly.

“Yes, Lord Prefect.” The white-browed man knew exactly where the battle had taken place. He immediately led a squad of ten people towards that gorge, flying at high speed.

The silver-haired Molde stared coldly at the distant mountains, his heart filled with a murderous intent. He could still sense the presence of the Sovereign artifact. Clearly...Linley’s group didn’t take it away or destroy it.

“My power is now much weaker. If someone were to challenge me...” This was what Molde was concerned about now. As a Lord Prefect and one of the 108 Asuras of the Infernal Realm, he had to face challengers, with the loser giving up the position and the winner becoming the new Asura or Lord Prefect. Thus, Molde had to reacquire that Sovereign artifact.

With a defensive Sovereign artifact, Molde was confident in his ability to maintain his position.

A long time later...

The figures of the white-browed man and his squad flashed forward, with the white-browed man holding that blood-colored armor in his hands.

“Hmph.” The silver-haired Molde’s eyes flashed, and a large corridor instantly appeared within the metallic lifeform. The blood-colored armor flew through the corridor towards Molde, then entered Molde’s body.

“Move out. We’re going back.” Molde said calmly.

“Yes, Lord Prefect.” The group replied in chorus.

And then, Molde strode to a private room deeper in the rear cabins of the metallic lifeform. The door to the rear cabin shut. There was no hint of light within this room.

The silver-haired Morde sat down quietly in the meditative position. Within the gloomy, dark room, Morde’s face appeared equally gloomy and dark. His wolf-like eyes, in this dark room, appeared all the more terrifying and heart-shaking.

“You ruined my son, then also ruined my future prospects!” In that room, Molde didn’t need to conceal in the slightest his killing intent. A wild, savage aura filled the room, but because of Molde’s Godrealm, the aura didn’t leak outside at all, and so those subordinates outside had no idea what was occurring within.

Molde’s eyes flashed savagely. “Fine. Since you ruined me, then I will ruin you as well!”

“Unfortunately, I’ve already destroyed that sheet of special paper. Otherwise, it would be much easier for me to convince the Sovereigns. With just a simple plan, I could easily cause Linley to die! But now that I destroyed that paper, it will be a bit tricky!” Molde pondered silently for a moment, considering what to do, then laughed coldly. “Still, it doesn’t matter. Although the paper was destroyed, at least I still know what the secret is. Since the soul pearls are no longer in my hands, there’s no point to keeping this secret.”

When Molde thought about what was going to occur, he couldn’t help but feel a hint of eagerness in his heart.

“You ruined me. So I’ll ruin you!” Molde growled. “I will publicize this secret...I will make it known to everyone, make it known to all of the Sovereigns!!!” His voice, filled with rage, made this secret room feel so sinister, so cold...

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 14, True, False

Although he wanted to make the secret public, this wasn't actually an easy thing to do.

If Linley were to learn of this secret before it made its way to the Sovereigns, then Linley would probably immediately return and immediately kill Molde! Molde pondered for a moment, then came up with a simple scheme.

Skymount Prefecture. The Lord Prefect's estate. The main hall.

A hundred Highgod warriors were standing respectfully before the main hall, awaiting the Lord Prefect's arrival.

"I wonder what the Lord Prefect summoned us all here for!"

They all mumbled to themselves, but then, moments later, a person emerged from a side door of the main hall. It was the silver-haired Molde. Molde's cold, sinister gaze swept across these Highgods, and all of them instantly stood up straight, not daring to look around or seem the slightest bit indolent. Molde strode to the front of the hall.

Seating himself atop his throne, Molde swept the people before him with his cold gaze. "I have a secret assignment for all of you! If you reveal this assignment...hmph, whoever reveals it will have his entire clan put to death." Military order was quite strict in the prefectural armies. Still, annihilating an entire clan because of revealing a secret was unheard of.

The hundred Highgods all felt their hearts tremble. They felt misery in their hearts. How was it that they were the ones to end up with this mission?

"But don't worry. As long as this mission isn't revealed, nothing will happen." Molde said calmly. "In addition, once you accomplish it, every single person will be awarded a billion inkstones!"

All of the Highgods were shocked.

These Highgods spent countless years building up their wealth, and yet still probably only had a few hundred million inkstones. They weren't Seven Star Fiends; they didn't have an extravagant amount of money. A single assignment with a reward of a billion inkstones? This was an astronomical amount of money.

Molde waved his hand, and one piece of black paper after another appeared in front of him.

"Whoosh!"

These pieces of paper suddenly flew downwards towards each person. Every single one of the hundred Highgods received a piece of paper. These Highgods couldn't help but look towards the paper, and with but a single glance, they completely memorized the contents of it.

At the same time, the faces of the hundred Highgods completely changed.

This secret...was truly terrifying.

“Did you see it?” Molde let out a cold laugh. “You don’t need to worry about if this information is true or false, but you must remember one thing! You cannot leak it out! If you leak it out...hmp.” Molde swept the group below with his gaze.

“Your subordinates do not dare.”

After one person fell to a knee, the other ninety nine soldiers all hurriedly knelt as well.

“Excellent.” Molde said calmly. “Fifteen of you, stand over there. You fifteen, go over there...”

....

“...and that leaves twenty five of you. You will form six squads!” Molde’s divine power flew out, easily spreading out across six people in the six groups. The first five groups had fifteen, while the last one had twenty five.

“Squad one, you will head to the western part of the Infernal Realm, to the Karol Continent. The fifteen of you will hand those sheets of paper to fifteen different people. This is the list of names and addresses! Remember, on the journey, no matter what, do not let this information be leaked out.” Molde once more instructed, then sent a black parchment flying towards squad one.

“Squad two, you will head to the eastern part of the Infernal Realm, to the Jadefloat Continent. This is the list of names and addresses.”

“Squad three, you will head to the southern part of the Infernal Realm, to the Muja Continent. Squad four, head to the northern part of the Infernal Realm, the Redbud Continent. Squad five, the five of you, head to the Starmist Sea...and squad six, you head to the Chaotic Sea.”

Molde delivered the lists of names and addresses to these people. These names were primarily names of Sovereign’s Emissaries. But of course, there were also many Lord Prefect level figures. The wider the net, the greater the chances of attracting interest from Sovereigns.

Six of the seven major regions of the Infernal Realm had squads assigned. The only region not assigned was the Bloodridge Continent!

Molde knew very well that if spread this news out to the Bloodridge Continent, it would most likely quickly spread to Linley’s ears.

“Each of you, leave a divine clone here in my estate.” Molde said calmly. “You have to keep a tight watch on each other. If anyone leaks the secret, immediately report it to me.” The reason Molde selected these individuals was because they were all fairly loyal, and because they all had divine clones.

“Yes, Lord Prefect.”

A hundred clones emerged.

“Then head out.” Molde didn’t wish to waste any time. The hundred Highgods assented, and then separated into six squads and left. With the members of the squads keeping an eye on the other members, and given how deadly the consequences of exposing the secret was, as well as the rich reward of a billion inkstones for successfully completing the mission, Molde felt confident that nothing would go amiss.

Molde laughed calmly. “Bloodridge Continent? I’ll go make that notification.”

Molde was still an Emissary of the Bloodridge Sovereign. It wasn’t hard for him to go pay a visit to the Sovereign. If he went in person, there was no way that Linley would learn the secret.

That very day, Molde flew out of the castle and headed towards the residence of the Bloodridge Sovereign.

The Bloodridge Continent. Cloudlink Mountains.

Deep within the Cloudlink Mountains, there was a lake that was a thousand kilometers in circumference. The air above the lake was perpetually covered with mist and fog. This sort of scene was actually quite common in the Infernal Realm, and many few people would pay attention to it. As for those people who lived near the Cloudlink Mountains, they all knew that anyone who entered deep into the middle of the lake would disappear into the mist, and then, dazed, reappear on the shore.

No one knew what was in the center.

“Splash...” The waters of the lake gently rolled out in waves, lapping at the shore.

A figure descended from the skies at high speed, landing at the edges of the lake. It was Molde. Molde stood there at the side of the lake for a moment, then flew into that endless fog.

At the center of the lake, there was a small island. The island was filled with all sorts of beautiful flowers, and all sorts of flying birds that lived here peacefully.

On the island, there was a plain, unadorned, cone-shaped palace. In the rear side of the palace, amidst the flowers, there was a stone table, where two men were seated, facing each other, staring raptly at the many chess pieces on the table. Behind these two men, there were two maids, whose faces were covered in smiles.

One of the two men had long, blood-red hair. This man had a wavy, blood-colored tattoo on his face. He was currently smiling, his eyes gleaming as he stared at the chess pieces.

Opposite him was a silver-haired, hawk-nosed man. This hawk-nosed man had two long, narrow eyes. Occasionally, a hint of a cold aura would flash within his eyes, capable of causing one to tremble.

“Teresia [Te’lei’xi’ya], you lose again, haha.” The blood-haired man said with a loud laugh.

“Another one, another one! I just learned this game!” The hawk-nosed man said hurriedly. “Boson [Bo’shen], you’ve been playing for years.”

“Fine, let’s play again. You’ll still lose though.” The blood-haired man said with a laugh.

This was a game with 256 pieces, representing soldiers and generals. Although it seemed to be simple, it actually contained within it many different ways of mobilizing armies. It also required a person to be adaptive and act based on the opponent’s situation. The more powerful one’s soul was, the more complicated one’s thought patterns would become, and the more interesting this game would be. In addition, one side would only win after all of the pieces of the other side were completely eliminated.

Even if one was slightly losing at the beginning, one still had a chance to win by using fewer numbers to overcome superior numbers.

Different situations required different resolutions. If one managed to calculate things out thoroughly, a single game could last for a very long time. These two people could spend several years playing a single game.

This was a war simulation game that a general in a material plane had developed to be used to help train military officers. But Sovereigns with eternal life who had no real pursuits loved to find and play these time-consuming games.

“This game of the 256 Soldiers and Generals...where did you find it?” The hawk-nosed man laughed.

“This? I discovered it from the ‘Siya’ material plane. I must say, this game is far more complicated and exciting than those games I played in the past. It’s quite fun!” The blood-haired man laughed as he began to control his pieces and make them move.

Those two women smiled as they watched, quietly chatting through divine sense.

“Sovereigns feel bored as well.”

“Lord Teresia, Sovereign of Wind, probably won’t be able to win. Last time, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction competed against our Sovereign for a thousand years without winning a single match.”

Right at this moment, a maid flew over from afar, then bowed and said, “Sovereign, Molde has come. He has an important matter to discuss with you, Sovereign.”

“Molde? Why is he coming at a time like this?” The Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson, frowned.

The hawk-nosed man laughed. “Haha, Boson, hurry up and deal with him.”

“Don’t try to rearrange the pieces and don’t try to cheat. I’ve memorized all of the pieces’ locations.” The Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson, gave Teresia a glance, and then walked away.

Within the Sovereign’s main hall.

The Lord Prefect of Skymount, Molde, was standing respectfully in front of the main hall. He saw a bloody mirage suddenly appear, and then, there in the main hall, the Bloodridge Sovereign took form.

Molde raised his head. Seeing the Bloodridge Sovereign, he couldn’t help but feel his heart tremble, and he hurriedly knelt down.

“Is there something you need from me?” The Bloodridge Sovereign said calmly.

The Bloodridge Sovereign was a lofty, exalted Sovereign, after all. He might jest and jape with the other Sovereigns, but in front of Deities, he, a Sovereign, was far beyond them.

“Sovereign, I just learned of a tremendous, heaven-shaking secret.” Molde said respectfully.

“Oh?” The Bloodridge Sovereign couldn’t help but give Molde a careful look. “Speak!”

“Sovereign, please look at this.” Molde produced a black piece of parchment. The Bloodridge Sovereign’s gaze fixed upon it, and instantly, that black parchment flew over towards him, then hovering in front of him. Sweeping it with a glance, the Bloodridge Sovereign’s face changed slightly as he then looked downwards towards Molde in surprise.

Molde remained on his knees, not daring to speak.

“Where did you obtain this information from?” The Bloodridge Sovereign said in a low voice. “How could a scroll containing such information possibly be made from such ordinary paper?”

“I acquired it by accident.” Molde said hurriedly.

He didn’t dare say that he had already acquired the nine pearls previously. If he did...the Sovereign might be so infuriated at the fact that he hadn’t offered it right away that he might kill Molde.

There was nothing Molde could do. He had already destroyed that original piece of paper.

Would Sovereigns necessarily believe it when they saw an earth-shaking revelation on an ordinary piece of paper?

If that green paper was still here, the Sovereign would definitely believe it! Because Sovereigns, at a glance, would know exactly where that green paper came from. Naturally, they would believe the words it contained. But the words on an ordinary piece of paper...would the Sovereigns believe it?

"You claim that Linley has those nine soul pearls?" The Bloodridge Sovereign said.

"I'm not the one making the claim. It is this piece of paper which states it." Molde didn't dare say anything else. This secret was simply too great. If he got involved, then he, a Lord Prefect, would probably lose his little life.

"Your most powerful divine clone is dead? Who killed it?" The Bloodridge Sovereign suddenly asked.

Molde was stunned. It was Linley who destroyed his most powerful divine clone. If the Sovereign wished to investigate, this would be fairly easy to discern. If one was to lie to a Sovereign, one would have to consider what sort of lie one was going to tell. If one was going to tell a lie that would be easily discovered, it would probably be better to tell the truth instead. But if the lie couldn't be discovered, then never admit it, even under threat of death!

"It was Linley who killed it." Molde admitted it.

The Bloodridge Sovereign suddenly rose to his feet. Molde couldn't help but feel startled.

"Hmph..." The Bloodridge Sovereign icily swept Molde with his gaze, then barked, "Molde, if an Overgod issued a mission, the paper on which the mission was written would definitely not be ordinary paper. How is it that you dare counterfeit information of such gravity?"

"I didn't." Molde said hurriedly terrified.

The Bloodridge Sovereign stood there in his hall, staring down at the kneeling Molde. In a calm voice, he said, "Molde, you made three mistakes. First of all, a mission issued by the Overgods would definitely not come on a piece of paper like this. Second, if an Overgod issued a mission, even if it involved three talismans, the Overgod would at most give a basic description of the three talismans. The Overgod would definitely not name someone in specific as carrying a talisman! Even if the Overgod was going to do so, the Overgod would clearly state the locations of all three talismans. Why would the Overgod just mention one? And third, your most powerful divine clone, Molde, just so happened to have been destroyed by Linley! This information states that Linley acquired the nine soul pearls? How could there be such a coincidence? And you are the first person to bring me this information? This is all too coincidental, isn't it?"

Molde's face changed.

"Hmph. Molde, because you have served me sincerely and diligently for so many years, I will spare your life. Begone." The Bloodridge Sovereign said calmly.

"No rush, no rush. Talismans from the Overgods? Let me see?" A figure suddenly appeared in the main hall. It was that hawk-nosed man.

"Go ahead and look. You heard what I said earlier, right?" The Bloodridge Sovereign said calmly.

The hawk-nosed man swept the parchment with his gaze, then nodded slightly. "The likelihood that the information your subordinate provided is true...is quite low. The paper is wrong, and the information only mentions a single person, Linley. And your subordinate just so happens to have a great enmity with Linley? It is quite odd. In addition, it has already been countless years since the last time the Overgods issued a mission."

“However...”

The hawk-nosed man laughed calmly. “If your subordinate wanted to harm Linley, how could he come up with something like this on his own? Ever since the multiverse was created, the Overgods have only issued six missions. There are very few Deities who even know that such a thing exists. Thus, I believe there is a chance that this is real.”

“That’s just the first point. The second point is, based on how long it has been since the sixth mission...I have the feeling that it is about time for the Overgods to issue another mission. It has been countless years.”

“Haha, Boson, I’m not busy anyhow, so I might as well go take a look. Haha...”

The hawk-nosed man disappeared from within that hall.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 15, The Sovereign Descends

Within the main hall, Molde remained on his knees.

But upon seeing the Sovereign of Wind suddenly depart, he felt a surge of wild joy in his heart. “Based on the conversation they had, it seems this person was a Sovereign as well! Good. Although the Bloodridge Sovereign didn’t believe me, at least one Sovereign has gone...this Linley, hmph, even if he hands over the nine soul pearls, he will find it hard to avoid death!”

When Molde thought about what that parchment had written on it, he couldn’t help but feel smug. If he had described things clearly, perhaps Linley would simply hand over the nine soul pearls, and the Sovereign would release Linley. But...in disseminating the news, Molde had changed things slightly.

Although he wasn’t able to make his scheme perfect in such a short period of time, as Molde saw it...it was enough to make Linley die.

“Linley, oh, Linley...a Paragon is going to die, just like that.” Molde mused to himself.

“Molde!” A cold voice suddenly rang out.

“Sovereign.” Molde hurriedly pressed his forehead against the floor, kowtowing.

The Bloodridge Sovereign’s cold gaze fell down upon Molde from up high. “I ask you this. Is the information contained in the parchment true or false. Are you certain of the information?” The Bloodridge Sovereign was still quite surprised that Molde was able to deliver a piece of paper like this. The words of the Sovereign of Wind were correct; how long ago had it been since an Overgod had issued a mission?

Very few people even knew about such a thing. Even if Molde wanted to make something up, how would he even know about it?

“Sovereign, your subordinate doesn’t know if it is true or false.” Molde said respectfully. “Your subordinate simply came in possession of this parchment. Because the information it contained was simply too astonishing, I knew...that you, Sovereign, would probably be intrigued by it. And so I immediately came to give it to you, Sovereign.”

Molde wouldn’t dare testify as to whether it was true or false.

If he dared to testify regarding its veracity, then it meant that he, Molde, had seen the true original!

“Hmph. Scram.” The Bloodridge Sovereign snapped.

“Yes.” Molde hurriedly bowed with respect, then left.

But there, at the front of the main hall, the Bloodridge Sovereign began to furrow his brows while standing there. “Why did Molde have to come now, instead of earlier or later? Teresia just so happened to be here when Molde came. Now that Teresia knows this, things will be tricky.” As he pondered, the Bloodridge Sovereign stretched out his divine sense.

Soon, the Bloodridge Sovereign’s divine sense spread out to cover the entire Bloodridge Continent.

Moments later, the Bloodridge Sovereign retracted his divine sense. Shaking his head and laughing, his body also flickered, then disappeared from the main hall.

As for Molde, he traversed the hazy white mist, then quickly departed.

“Hmph. As soon as I retrieved my Sovereign artifact, I immediately began to plan this out, and then I delivered this news to the Sovereigns. Even as fast as Linley travels, I imagine he probably hasn’t reached Indigo Prefecture yet.” Molde was very efficient in carrying things out. He was afraid that if too much time passed, there would be new variables.

Thus, he had travelled here by himself at top speed to notify the Sovereign.

As for the Sovereigns, if they were to chase after Linley, their speed would be terrifyingly fast.

Mountains rose, one after the other in a never-ending chain.

A metallic lifeform was traversing the skies.

“We’ve already passed through the Indigo Prefecture border. In a short period of time, we will reach the Skyrite Mountains.” Linley, standing at the front of the metallic lifeform, stared at the outside world through the translucent metal. He laughed while speaking.

“Indigo Prefecture.” Diana and Olivier both stood there as well, staring into the distance.

Suddenly...

“Whoosh.” A terrifying tornado suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the skies, surrounding Linley’s metallic lifeform, causing the world to suddenly grow dim and hazy.

“What’s going on?” Bebe was shocked.

“Not good.” Linley’s face changed dramatically. The sudden descent of this tornado caught even him completely off-guard. The person who had just come was too terrifying. Linley didn’t have any reservations; with a thought, he instantly spread out earth-type Sovereign power, forming a protective barrier around the five of them.

The entire metallic lifeform trembled, then was blown into smithereens.

Linley’s group of five were still completely dazed, but right at this moment, the tornado vanished.

“Eh?” Linley looked in front of him. There was a man currently standing in midair in front of them. This person had long silver hair, a hawk-nose, and pair of slender eyes. The man’s gaze was like a knife, making those who saw his gaze feel coldness in their hearts. This silver-haired man looked calmly at Linley’s group of five.

“Boss, who is he?” Bebe sent mentally.

The faces of Olivier, Diana, and their son Deia changed dramatically.

“Who else could it be? Aside from a Sovereign, who could possibly suddenly appear in front of us without me sensing anything?” Linley sent back. And then, smiling, Linley bowed towards the man in front of him. “Linley of Indigo Prefecture greets you, Sovereign!” After having met with the Chief Sovereign of Death and the Abyssal Fruit Tree, Linley understood one thing!

Sovereigns might appear as an energy construct or with their true bodies, or in the shape of a human.

In short, one couldn't judge a Sovereign through appearance, only by power. A girl might appear before you, but that girl could very well be a Sovereign. There was no way at all to judge such a person's strength from the outside.

The silver-haired man revealed a hint of a smile on his face as well. "Oh, you are able to infuse Will? You really are a Paragon. You were able to ascertain my identity so soon." This Sovereign of Wind could tell from the barrier Linley had created with earth-type Sovereign power that there was a surge of Will infused within it.

More importantly...

Linley didn't waste a single bit of his Sovereign power. This made it simple to judge Linley's power.

"Sovereign, might I ask why you have stopped us?" Linley smiled as he bowed. "Please instruct me!"

"The rest of you, step aside." The Sovereign of Wind gave a calm glance to Bebe and the others.

As Sovereigns saw it, the fewer Deities who knew about Overgod talismans and missions, the better. Sovereigns felt that Deities weren't even qualified to know about these things. Linley was a Paragon, and so he could speak amiably with Linley, but the Sovereign of Wind didn't want the other four nearby to listen in.

"Leave for now." Linley glanced at them.

Knowing that this person was a Sovereign, Bebe didn't dare say anything. He, Olivier, and the other two immediately flew away. Olivier's son, Deia, stared in amazement and disbelief at the Sovereign of Wind. Clearly, Deia was very curious about the legendary Sovereigns.

Moments later, Bebe and the others were thousands of kilometers away.

"Sovereign, there is nobody nearby aside from us now." Linley looked at the silver-haired man in front of him.

"My request is very simple!"

The Sovereign of Wind laughed calmly as he glanced at Linley. "A Overgod talisman, in the hands of a Deity, is completely useless. It's best if you hand over the Overgod talisman you possess to me!"

Linley couldn't help but feel completely lost.

"Overgod talisman? What Overgod talisman?" Linley asked.

The silver-haired man's eyes had a hint of coldness flash through them. With an icy snort, he said, "What, do you want to lie to my face and deceive me?" Actually, the Sovereign was now rather puzzled as well. "By the looks of it, it seems as though this Linley really has no idea what an Overgod talisman is. But then again, who knows. If a Paragon wants to put on an act, I wouldn't necessarily be able to see through him."

"Sovereign, I am willing to swear an oath in the name of the Overgods that I truly have no idea what an Overgod talisman is." Linley said hurriedly.

The silver-haired man felt puzzled now.

"Sovereign, what is this Overgod talisman of which you speak?" Linley said, puzzled. "Based on what I know, the four Overgods are the personifications of the four Edicts. They shouldn't have any human emotions. Why would there be Overgod talismans?" But as soon as he spoke, Linley knew that he was wrong.

If they didn't have human emotions, did that necessarily mean they couldn't issue talismans?

Where did Overgod artifacts come from, then? Since there was such a thing as an Overgod artifact, then naturally there could be Overgod talismans as well.

But this silver-haired man thought that Linley didn't know about the existence of Overgod talismans and Overgod artifacts. He said calmly, "Since Overgods are able to take the form of a person if they choose, why is it that you think you can understand them? Based on what I know, of the three talismans, the 'nine soul pearls' are in your hands, correct?"

"The 'nine soul pearls' of the three talismans?" Linley couldn't help but say, startled.

Linley was indeed startled, because he knew what this person was speaking of. "This Sovereign has come to find me for an Overgod talisman. So...he is referring to those nine soul pearls which allowed Molde to stay alive. That's the Overgod talisman. No wonder it is so unique and has such incomprehensible power. So it is an Overgod talisman...but what are they used for?"

At this moment, Linley truly wanted to send his divine sense into his interspatial ring to investigate those nine soul pearls.

However, with the Sovereign in front of him, Linley didn't dare act in such a way. Linley didn't know what sort of detection powers a Sovereign possessed. Given the divine powers of a Sovereign, however, most likely they would be able to pay attention to anything he did. If Linley was to immediately investigate his interspatial ring, wouldn't the Sovereign connect it all together?

"There are a total of three Overgod talismans?" Linley had a completely stunned look on his face.

The Sovereign of Wind looked closely at Linley, then let out a cold laugh. "Linley, although you have become a Paragon, you are still a Deity. An Overgod talisman is useless to you. I urge you to hand over this Overgod talisman. Don't say that you don't have it. I know...that the nine soul pearls are in your hands!"

"I will give you just a single chance." The Sovereign of Wind said calmly. "If you hand over the nine soul pearls now, I will spare your life. But if you try to dissemble even the slightest bit, then don't blame me for killing you, then taking the Overgod talisman from you."

The Sovereign of Wind actually wasn't completely confident about whether or not Linley had those nine soul pearls either.

In fact...

Whether the Overgods had even issued a mission, or if there were even three Overgod talismans, was unverified. However, to these Sovereigns who possessed eternal life, there were very few things capable of drawing their interest. Overgod talismans, however, were things which were more than enough to drive them insane with excitement.

If there was even the slightest chance of it being true, the Sovereign of Wind wanted to try and 'trick' Linley into admitting it. He pretended to be completely confident. If Linley did actually have the nine soul pearls, he might be nervous and thus hand it over.

Linley's heart clenched. "Can it be that the Sovereign knew that I acquired those nine soul pearls from Molde? Only my people know about this, and Molde himself. Can it be that it was Molde who told the Sovereign? But Molde and I have a huge enmity between us. If he wanted to entrap me, it shouldn't be as simple as this!"

Linley hesitated.

“Sovereign, just now, I told you that I am willing to swear an oath in the name of the Overgods. Why are you saying such things? Can it be that I would dare lie to the Overgods?” Linley said hurriedly. “I, Linley, swear by the Overgod of Fate that before the Sovereign told me about Overgod talismans, I knew nothing whatsoever about Overgod talismans. If I say a single false word...let my soul be shattered and dispersed!”

Linley looked solemnly at the Sovereign of Wind.

Indeed, the Sovereign of Wind frowned. An oath to the Overgods wasn't something a person would casually make. After all, the universe itself was controlled by the Edicts.

“Can it be that Linley really has no idea? That the news was false?” The Sovereign of Wind mused, puzzled.

“Teresia!” A voice rang out.

Linley saw that in the distance, a blood-robed figure had suddenly emerged. A blood-red robe, and blood-red hair. The newcomer's aura was even more overbearing and tyrannical than the Sovereign of Wind's. He flew over unhappily. “Teresia, Linley belongs to my Bloodridge Continent. You can't act wildly. Molde spouted some rubbish, and so you believed him? Overgod talismans? How many years has it been since they appeared? How could they now have appeared out of nowhere?”

Teresia was startled.

The words of the Bloodridge Sovereign as good as told Linley that they weren't completely sure either.

The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, sent mentally, “Boson, what's going on with you? How could you tell the truth in front of Linley? Aren't you as good as trying to help him out? He's just a Deity. Why act like this?” The Sovereign of Wind was very unhappy. He didn't understand why the Bloodridge Sovereign was helping Linley.

As he saw it, the Bloodridge Sovereign should join forces with him to make Linley hand over the talisman.

“I heard everything Linley said.” The Bloodridge Sovereign swept Linley with his gaze, and then looked back at Teresia. “He swore an oath by the Overgods. How can this be false? In addition, the news stated that the nine soul pearls were placed alongside the Overgod decree. If Linley had both the nine soul pearls and the Overgod decree, how could he not know what an Overgod talisman is? Clearly, Molde was lying. Or, to put it another way, the news he brought was false.”

The Sovereign of Wind had to admit that the Bloodridge Sovereign's words made sense.

“Overgod decree? What's that?” Linley was secretly startled.

But then, Linley suddenly understood...

“This Molde really wanted to kill me!” Linley was shocked. “If I was caught off-guard and immediately handed over the nine soul pearls, most likely this silver-haired Sovereign would then demand the Overgod decree. And if I didn't hand it over!?! The Sovereign, after acquiring the nine soul pearls, would definitely believe that the information he had received was real and might very well then, for the sake of acquiring the Overgod decree, kill me and then inspect my interspatial ring.”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 16, A Tribulation

Linley secretly celebrated.

Fortunately, he had suspected Molde of plotting against him, and that this scheme shouldn't be a simple one. Thus, from the very beginning, he had staunchly insisted on swearing an 'Overgod oath'. And indeed, there were no problems with Linley's oath to the Overgods; although he had the nine soul pearls, prior to this, he truly knew nothing whatsoever about the Overgod talismans.

But the Sovereign of Wind didn't realize this.

This was because, according to that sheet of paper, Linley had acquired both the nine soul pearls as well as the Overgod decree. As Teresia, Sovereign of Wind, viewed it, if the information was true, then Linley should know what Overgod talismans are. But if the news was false, then Linley wouldn't know.

By the looks of it, Linley truly didn't know. That meant the news should be false!

This logic seemed flawless!

Actually, what the Sovereign of Wind didn't realize was that Molde was a victim of his own cleverness. The news on that sheet of paper contained both truths and falsehoods! Molde's actions were intended to make it so that even if Linley handed over the soul pearls, he would still be pursued by the Sovereigns. Since Linley wouldn't be able to hand over the Overgod decree, then the Sovereign would probably kill Linley to 'seize it'.

The information was partly true and partly false, so as to cause Linley's death.

What he didn't realize was that, precisely because the information was partly true and partly false, Linley actually managed to dodge this tribulation. It truly was a case where one was a victim of one's own cleverness!

"It seems this information is probably false." The silver-haired Sovereign, Teresia, said calmly.

"Only you would be so bored as to believe in it." The Bloodridge Sovereign snickered.

Linley finally let out a mental sigh of relief.

But then, the corners of Teresia's narrow eyes once more turned to Linley and the interspatial ring on his finger. Laughing calmly, he said, "However, Linley, given how confident you are in your innocence...fine, then. Hand over your interspatial ring to me and let me look through it. If there is nothing inside, then this news is clearly false...oh, and bring all of your divine clones out as well. Let me inspect all of their interspatial rings."

Linley's heart lurched.

Inspect his interspatial rings? Linley knew very well that those nine pearls were right inside his interspatial ring.

"If I hand over those nine soul pearls, he will be absolutely certain that the information he gained was real, and would definitely try to force me to hand over the Overgod decree. I won't be able to hand it out, and this

Sovereign will probably mercilessly kill me.” Linley understood this. By now, even though he had the nine soul pearls, he definitely couldn’t hand them over.

In addition, Overgod talismans...one could tell just from the name that these things would surely attract the attention of many Sovereigns.

If he were to admit having the soul pearls, even if this Sovereign of Wind didn’t kill him, most likely one of the other Sovereigns would. He would never again be able to live a peaceful life.

“Sovereign.” Linley had a look of anger and humiliation on his face. “I, Linley, have trained for so many years and finally become a Paragon! You are a Sovereign, yes, but even common mortals can grow angry...much less me, Linley! Faced with your repeated questions, Sovereign, I, Linley, provided you with repeated answers. I even swore an oath by the Overgod of Fate. What else do you want?”

The Sovereign of Wind was stunned.

Linley stood there in midair. He stared at the Sovereign of Wind, not shrinking back at the slightest. Instead, he started to laugh. “You want my divine clones to come out? Fine!” With a thought, Linley transformed into five different people as his other four divine clones all emerged.”

“Four divine clones!” The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, was startled.

Generally speaking, most Deities trained in one type of Law, with a few who trained in two. There were very few who trained in three types of Laws, but Linley actually trained in four. This was indeed astonishing.

“You are quite wise.” Teresia said emotionlessly.

Linley and Teresia stared at each other. Linley showed no hint of subservience or humility as he said calmly, “Sovereign, my five clones have, in total, five interspatial rings! But I, Linley, feel that I have already demonstrated sufficient sincerity. I’ve even sworn an oath by the Overgods, and yet you still want to investigate my interspatial rings? Fine then. Investigate away. The five interspatial rings are all there. However, pardon me, Linley, for not removing my binding from them. I, Linley, am a Highgod Paragon, not your slave. If you want to investigate my interspatial rings...then just go ahead and kill me!”

Linley stared at Teresia.

Linley’s intentions were clear...

You are powerful! You are a Sovereign! But I’m not something that you can toy around with as you please. If you truly want to be shameless, fine, then. Come and kill me!

The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, stared at Linley, puzzled, like a viper staring at his prey.

Sovereigns cared about face as well. Highgod Paragons were ‘emperors’ amongst Deities. They too cared about face. Given that Teresia wasn’t completely certain of the situation, for him to treat Linley in this manner, forcing him to swear an oath and then still insisting on checking all of his interspatial rings, was indeed rather excessive.

Most likely, a Paragon who had even a bit of a temper would rather die than suffer this sort of humiliation.

“Teresia!” The face of the Bloodridge Sovereign sank as he watched this happen. He said angrily, “Linley has already sworn an oath by the Overgods. In addition, the information you received came on a piece of ordinary paper, rather than through an Overgod decree. You intend to search through all five of his interspatial rings? Once word of this spreads, hmph!”

The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, began to worry. “Although Linley said that he will let me search, he meant for me to kill him, then search. He’s clearly forcing my hand. It wouldn’t be an issue if I found those nine soul pearls; I would be proven right. But if I kill him and don’t find them...then I would have unjustly accused him! Once this news spreads out, I would truly lose face.”

Teresia was hesitating.

“Sovereign, if you want to investigate, then please do so. I, Linley, have something to attend to. I can’t accompany you any longer.” Linley said solemnly. “As for that ‘Molde’ you mentioned, Sovereigns, not long ago, I killed his most powerful divine clone! He clearly came up with this information so as to unjustly accuse me. If you don’t plan to investigate any further, Sovereign, then I’m going to go find Molde. Hmph, I didn’t ‘pull up grass by the roots’ and exterminate all his clones; I didn’t expect he would repay me by doing this.”

Teresia frowned.

Right. In the palace of the Bloodridge Sovereign, he had learned that Linley had killed Molde’s most powerful divine clone.

The Bloodridge Sovereign sent secretly, “Teresia, you need to pay more attention to your status. You are a Sovereign! Given what has happened, are you still going to insist on investigating?”

“Boson, are you going to stop me? By the looks of things, it seems you are standing on Linley’s side.” Teresia sent back.

“I’m not the one stopping you. Let me tell you something. The Redbud Sovereign, she asked me to take good care of Linley.” The Bloodridge Sovereign sent back. “In addition, based on what I know, Linley was in the Planar Battlefield not long ago and just recently returned. Where would he have acquired an Overgod talisman from? This information is clearly false. Even if an Overgod talisman exists, Linley isn’t necessarily the one carrying it. And let’s say that there really is one, and Linley really is the one carrying it! What, do you want to try and fight over the Overgod talisman?”

“What, why can’t I?” Teresia sent back.

“I know that you are a Paragon in your Laws. But you are simply a Lesser Sovereign. Later, when the storm comes...you should know that in each of the past six missions, it was a Chief Sovereign who succeeded. Over the course of the Overgod mission, Sovereigns fell. You truly want to get involved?”

Teresia hesitated.

“In addition, this news is completely false.” The Bloodridge Sovereign sent. “If it was true, how could it be that there was no hint of it before this? How could there be such a coincidence, that we just so happened to be the first to learn of it? How could there be such a coincidence, that the news was sent over by Molde? Who just coincidentally happened to have had one of his clones killed by Linley? And Linley...he’s a Paragon, yet would rather die than hand it over? Do you really think this is possible? Overgod talismans are useless to him!”

Teresia was convinced.

“Linley has a relationship with the Redbud Sovereign?” Teresia sent back.

Teresia was just a Lesser Sovereign, while the Redbud Sovereign was an Intermediate Sovereign. More importantly, the Redbud Sovereign was birthed from the Amethyst Mountains, and was the first Amethyst Godbeast. She was countless times more powerful than Reisgem. Even Teresia was somewhat afraid of the Redbud Sovereign.

“Of course he does. You can ask around. Linley specializes in using her Amethyst Space. The Amethyst Space technique is the supreme technique of the Redbud Sovereign.” The Bloodridge Sovereign sent back.

The Bloodridge Sovereign was right there. There was no way Teresia would be allowed to act against Linley.

In addition, the preponderance of the evidence and facts available indicated that the news was false!

He, Teresia, had the exalted status of Sovereign. He couldn't embarrass himself like this.

Teresia swept Linley with his slitted gaze, then said calmly, “Since you've sworn an oath, I naturally believe you.” He swept his gaze past the interspatial rings belonging to Linley's five clones, and then, with a flicker, he suddenly disappeared from Linley's field of vision, his movements far faster than what a Paragon-level expert like Linley was capable of.

“Is this a Sovereign's speed? No wonder it is said that a Paragon facing a Sovereign isn't able to fight back at all.” Linley felt secretly astonished.

“Thank you, Sovereign.” Linley bowed towards the Bloodridge Sovereign in front of him, showing his gratitude.

“Heh heh...” The Bloodridge Sovereign let out a calm chuckle. “Linley, your Four Divine Beasts clan resides within my Bloodridge Continent, and Beirut is my Emissary. The relationship between you and Beirut is not a shallow one. And, you are in the right in this matter. Of course I should protect you. If you have some time in the future, you can pay a visit to my Bloodridge Island. Bloodridge Island is in the Cloudlink Mountains.”

“Yes, Sovereign.” Linley said gratefully.

“Are you planning to go kill Molde?” The Bloodridge Sovereign said.

“Yes.” Linley nodded. “This Molde tried to scheme against me. How can I spare him?”

It was Molde who had acquired an Overgod talisman. Molde hadn't publicly announced that he had acquired it, and now, he was trying to use it to scheme against Linley, and even mentioned some ‘Overgod decree’. He was quite insidious.

“No need. You can head straight back to the Skyrise Mountains.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said.

Linley was stunned.

What? The Sovereign was going to stop him?

Based on Linley's understanding, Sovereigns generally wouldn't interfere in battles between Deities. Over the course of countless years, quite a large number of Sovereign's Emissaries had perished.

“Given his current level of strength, Molde is no longer qualified to be my Emissary.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed calmly. “More importantly, it now seems as though Molde lied to me and deceived me. Hmph!” The Bloodridge Sovereign's face sank. To deceive a Sovereign...that was punishable by death!

Within city of Lucliffe, close to the Skymount Mountains. Within a secluded courtyard.

“Everything has been prepared. All I need to do is wait for news of Linley's death.” Molde sat there in the garden, quite anxious.

Although he felt 90% certain that Linley would die, he was still worried. Worried that somehow Linley would be lucky enough to survive this tribulation, then come for revenge. Thus, he no longer dared to return

to his estate, instead coming to this city. Killing was forbidden within the limits of a city! This was the rule the Sovereigns had established! Even Paragons wouldn't dare to violate it.

Suddenly...

A terrifyingly powerful aura suddenly appeared within the garden, and then an inky black energy began to gather, forming into a silver-haired man.

"Sovereign." Molde, seeing this, was terrified and instantly knelt down.

This was a body formed from energy into the shape of the Bloodridge Sovereign. The Bloodridge Sovereign's own body was ten million kilometers away, but through divine sense, he was still able to form an energy clone. The energy clones of a Sovereign were more than enough to kill the vast majority of Highgods. But of course...it wasn't enough to kill a Highgod Paragon.

This was the reason why that Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, had to make his true body hasten to Linley's location.

"You dared to deceive me." The Bloodridge Sovereign gave Molde a calm look.

"Swish!" A dark, red, illusory arrow suddenly shot out from the energy clone's forehead.

"No, I..." Molde, seeing the situation, wanted to say something, but the dark red arrow shot into his body, and then his eyes grew dim. He fell, never to rise again.

"Clang!" The Sovereign artifact, that armor, fell out.

The energy clone picked up the Sovereign armor, then transformed into a ray of light, leaving the city.

Yes, it was forbidden to fight in cities.

But that was a rule made by the Sovereigns! Sovereigns weren't prevented from killing people.

A black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform was flying at high speed within Indigo Prefecture.

"Boss, just now, I was worried to death." Bebe began to laugh. "Right, Boss, what did the Sovereign want you for?"

Linley, hearing this, couldn't help but think of those nine soul pearls.

There was no Sovereign nearby right now. With a thought, Linley sent his divine sense into the interspatial ring, in search of those nine soul pearls.

Within that lifeless region.

A faint green aura surrounded the crown, which was adorned with nine soul pearls.

"This...this...the nine soul pearls...that tattered crown..." Linley was completely stupefied.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 17, Too Hot to Handle

Within the metallic lifeform. Because of Bebe's words, Linley used his divine sense to investigate the nine soul pearls within his interspatial ring. But what Linley saw was something he had never even imagined...those nine soul pearls had actually fused with that tattered crown. That crown was currently glowing with a faint aura that swirled around it. It was no longer broken and tattered looking.

Seeing this, a look of astonishment appeared on Linley's face.

"Boss, what is it?" Bebe, seeing this, couldn't help but ask.

"Nothing." Linley hurriedly reclaimed his equanimity and laughed, while at the same time he spoke spiritually with Bebe. "Bebe, those nine soul pearls are connected to something very important. That Sovereign who came earlier came for the sake of those nine soul pearls. From now onwards, no matter what, don't discuss those nine soul pearls with anyone. Even after we return to the Skyrise Mountains, don't discuss it."

Bebe had endured countless trials by Linley's side. He knew a grave situation when he saw one, and he hurriedly spoke back through their spiritual bond, "Don't worry, Boss."

"Olivier, Diana, Deia." Linley looked towards Olivier's group of three, then said through divine sense, "From today onwards, you must completely forget about those nine soul pearls. Understand? If you ever mention them, you will definitely cause a storm of blood. I will probably suffer for it, while you, as people with some inside knowledge, will probably be seized and questioned."

Linley didn't even dare imagine how many people would suffer once they became connected to the nine soul pearls.

Aside from Molde, only Olivier's family of three and Bebe knew that Linley had acquired the nine soul pearls. Once this news leaked out, Olivier, Bebe, and the other two would definitely be pursued.

"The nine soul pearls?" Olivier didn't ask anything further as he sent back, "Don't worry. We'll act as though we never saw anything."

"Don't worry, Uncle Linley." Deia said as well.

Olivier and Diana were both Highgods. They knew how important this matter was. Deia was an adult now as well, and as he saw it, for someone like Linley, an invincible Paragon, to say such a thing meant that this definitely was a serious matter.

"Molde should be dead now, so as long as you don't tell anyone, in the future, there shouldn't be any major issues. Even if there are, at most it would involve me." Linley sent. He understood that although that Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, had departed, that didn't mean the other Sovereigns wouldn't suspect anything.

Linley frowned while pondering to himself. "Molde most likely didn't just spread this news to just one or two Sovereigns. It took me less than a year to go from the Skymount Prefecture to Indigo Prefecture. The Bloodridge Sovereign and that Sovereign of Wind were both fast, but most likely the other Sovereigns haven't received this information yet. But shortly afterwards, they will learn it. They will come looking for me..."

As long as he had to deal with it by himself, it would be fine.

He was a Soul Mutate Highgod with the power of Will. Sovereigns wouldn't be able to hypnotize him.

But Olivier, Deia, and the others...they were different. It was best to separate them from this matter early on.

Skyrite Mountains. Linley's residence.

Reynolds was seated on the ground. He was lying against a tree, holding a book in his hands, while Yale and George were seated facing each other.

"Third Bro is too studious when it comes to training. As soon as he returned, he immediately went into closed-door training. Not even his original body is resting. Given his current level, why is he training so frantically?" Reynolds sat there on the ground, his gaze on his book while he mumbled aloud. "His original body and his four divine clones...he should leave at least one of them to accompany his bros in chatting. He can tell us about his journey, but he didn't even chat with us. He went straight into closed-door training."

George shook his head, giving Reynolds, seated on the ground, a sideways glance. He laughed, "Fourth Bro, can it be that you believe that if Third Bro was as lazy as you, he would have been able to reach his current level? No matter how talented you are, you still have to work hard."

"I understand." Reynolds replied, and then he suddenly saw the distant Bebe. He hurriedly called out towards him, "Hey, Bebe, c'mere."

"I'm busy. I'll come later." Bebe quickly ran away.

Bebe flew down the stairs, and as he did, the corridor grew cold and dark.

Soon, Bebe arrived at a private room.

"Creaaaaak." The stone door was pushed open. Linley was there, seated in the meditative position within that stone room, his long hair hanging loosely. Linley opened his eyes and glanced at Bebe, then laughed and nodded. "Bebe, sit."

The stone door was shut.

Bebe looked at Linley, puzzled. "Boss, something you need?"

"Bebe." Linley spoke to him through their spiritual link. "Previously, you asked me about the nine soul pearls, right? I'll tell you now, but our conversation must be through our spiritual link. This is because...I can't be sure if there is currently a Sovereign using his divine sense to monitor me!"

Linley was unable to detect the divine sense of a Sovereign, which was why, to be safe, Linley didn't dare to bring out the crown a single time.

"But of course, it is still early on. Most likely, most Sovereigns don't know about this. Thus, the chance that we are currently being investigated is quite low. Nonetheless, to be safe, we need to be vigilant." After having experienced that last trial, Linley didn't want to rely on luck alone.

"It seems this is a serious problem." Bebe's eyes lit up as he sent back.

"It is indeed quite serious. Those nine soul pearls are an Overgod talisman. That's something even Sovereigns want. But, I can't hand it over, because once I hand over those nine soul pearls, the Sovereigns will definitely keep asking me for an 'Overgod decree'. Handing them over would just cause a disaster! Right now, the most important thing is to hide those nine soul pearls."

Linley had pondered over this for a long time. Although he had quite a few good ideas, in the end, he chose one which required Bebe's help.

"Boss, tell me." Bebe sent back.

Linley said aloud, "Bebe, you need to eat divine sparks, right? This interspatial ring has more than enough within." As he spoke, he took out an interspatial ring and gave it to Bebe. While he said those things allowed, he simultaneously said mentally through divine sense, "Bebe, the Overgod talisman is inside this ring. I can't open it up. What you need to do is to swallow the ring. You should now be able to make godspark weapons, right? Hide this ring inside of a godspark weapon and fuse it into it. I trust you are able to do this."

"Don't worry, Boss. I am currently making a godspark artifact." Bebe was completely confident.

When Bebe had just become a Highgod, he wasn't able to forge godspark weapons.

But it had been more than a thousand years. After having eaten so many divine sparks, Bebe already had the power to forge godspark weapons.

"In a bit, I'll swallow this ring into my stomach, but I won't digest it. I'll cover it with a godspark weapon. Heh heh, a godspark weapon...even Sovereigns aren't able to see through them and see what is inside them. Even if a Sovereign comes to investigate us, how would the Sovereign end up suspecting my godspark weapons?" Bebe was completely confident.

"Even if he wanted to search, he would probably search me first." Linley sent back with a faint smile.

Items like Overgod talismans, to Deities, were quite dangerous.

Because of the trick Molde had played, Linley didn't dare to hand over the nine soul pearls at all. If he didn't hand it over, it wouldn't be so bad; most likely, the Sovereigns would believe that Molde was trying to harm Linley. But if he handed them over...it would be strange if the Sovereigns didn't then demand Linley hand over the Overgod decree as well. If Linley handed over the 'tattered crown', the Sovereigns probably would go mad and most likely suspect Linley to be in possession of all three items.

By then, Linley would be at the heart of a vortex of battles between Sovereigns.

"If they aren't able to find it on me, the Sovereigns will probably give up. Unless a Sovereign was absolutely certain that the Overgod talisman exists...only then would they frantically search for it." Linley was very confident, because based on the information, he could tell...that the Sovereigns didn't know whether or not the news about the Overgod talismans was true or not.

Perhaps the Overgods hadn't even issued a mission.

Linley's predictions were correct. This matter wasn't finished. Molde was dead, but the 100 soldiers he had sent out didn't know that. They still hastened to places throughout the Infernal Realm.

The Starmist Sea was fairly close to the Bloodridge Continent.

Starmist Sea. Deep within the sea.

A nine storied tower. The farther down one went, the more space it took up. This nine storied tower that was located deep within the Starmist Sea took up a hundred kilometers, and was nearly five thousand meters high. The nine storied tower was completely, pitch-black, but the outside layer was faintly glowing with light, keeping the water of the sea at bay.

Within the nine storied tower, at the main gates. Two horned warriors were there, standing guard.

Within the tower. The first floor. Within the eastern hall.

At the front of the hall, there was a throne glowing with illusory light. The figure atop the throne seemed so blurry, but the awe-inspiring, heart-shaking aura which manifested from this man caused a violet-robed man at the back of hall to kneel in terror, not even daring to raise his head.

“Sovereign.” The violet-robed man knelt down before the throne. “Your subordinate just received this news, and then I rushed over here, not even daring to look back.”

“Sovereign.” The violet-robed man knelt there on the floor of the hall. “Your subordinate received some news. There is word regarding an Overgod talisman.”

“Overgod talisman?”

A deep, hoarse voice echoed forth.

Instantly, that black piece of paper flew towards the figure seated upon the throne, pausing momentarily before the throne. And then, the piece of paper began to burn before transforming into ashes

“It was actually an ordinary piece of paper that contained this news? Laughable.” The hoarse voice rang out. “Where did you hear this news from?”

“Sovereign, a Highgod delivered it to us. When I saw it, I immediately found that Highgod and began to interrogate him. At first, the Highgod insisted that he gained it by accident and wanted to offer it to me. But I didn’t believe it and intensified the questioning. In the end, I learned that this news came from Lord Prefect ‘Molde’ of Skymount Prefecture, of the Bloodridge Continent. He was the one who sent this person here. I didn’t dare to ponder this, and instead immediately came to report it to you.”

“A Lord Prefect of the Bloodridge Prefecture?”

The Sovereign, seated on his throne, pondered silently for a moment. “You did very well. Alright, then, you can leave now.”

“Yes, Sovereign.” After hearing the words, ‘you did very well’, the violet-robed man’s eyes flashed with delight as he immediately left.

“This news didn’t come on an Overgod decree. The chances that this is real is rather low, but for the Lord Prefect to dare act in such a way, perhaps...there really might be a chance.” That blurry figure immediately vanished, disappearing from the throne.

The bloody sunlight shone down upon the Skyrite Mountains.

The carvings of the Four Divine Beasts clan within the Skyrite Mountains all appeared so eye-catching. There were people visible everywhere throughout the mountains.

“Whoosh!”

A blurry human figure suddenly appeared before the Skyrite Mountains, seeming to have just teleported here. This man was dressed in a dark violet robe, which had stars embroidered atop of it. His long, deep violet hair hung loosely to his shoulders. His features were almost devilishly handsome, but there was a very fine, small horn in his forehead.

This new arrival swept the Skyrite Mountains with his gaze, then revealed a hint of a smile. “Those four divine beasts died. I didn’t imagine that their progeny would produce a Paragon.”

And then, with another movement, he once more disappeared.

In the air above Linley's estate. That dark-violet robed man once more appeared out of nowhere.

"Who is this?" Reynolds, upon seeing someone suddenly appear out of nowhere in the air above him, was badly startled.

The guards surrounding this empty space were all stunned as well. Before they even noticed it, someone had appeared above them. In addition, there had been quite a few people staring into the skies. The person seemed to have teleported here, as he had appeared immediately.

"Who is this?" Yale sent mentally, stunned. "I...I can't see him clearly. He seems to be completely wrapped in a layer of fog."

"I can't tell either." Bebe also mumbled, astonished.

This figure descended, landing on the ground. He calmly released his aura, making it so that everyone nearby did not dare to approach him.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!" Two figures charged out from the main hall.

"Greetings, Sovereign." The two figures simultaneously bowed.

"Linley...Beirut..." The newcomer glanced at him with his violet pupils. "Let's chat inside the room." As he spoke, his body flickered, then vanished from that location. His speed was countless times faster than that of a Highgod Paragon.

Linley and Beirut exchanged a glance.

"Linley, your predictions were quite accurate." Beirut sent with a laugh.

"It was easy to understand. Only, I didn't imagine that someone would come so fast." Linley sent with a sigh. "Lord Beirut, which Sovereign is this?"

"The Starmist Sovereign! He's the one who controls the Starmist Sea. In terms of power, amongst the seven Sovereigns of Destruction, he is only weaker than the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. He is far more powerful than that Sovereign of Wind who came last time. Come, let's go inside." Beirut sent, and then Linley and Beirut immediately stepped into the main hall.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 18, Joke

Within the main hall. All the outsiders had departed.

The Starmist Sovereign was seated on his throne, and his dark, violet gaze landed upon Linley. “Linley, based on what I know, you have acquired an Overgod talisman, the ‘nine soul pearls’, as well as the ‘Overgod decree’ which describes these three items. The Overgod talisman and Overgod decree are useless to you. You had best hand them over directly to me. Of course, I will not make you hand them over for nothing.”

“Forgive me, Sovereign.” Linley bowed as he spoke. “I do not possess the Overgod talisman or the Overgod decree.”

“Rumble...”

A gloomy, cold, black aura that didn't contain a hint of light wafted out from the Starmist Sovereign's body. It instantly filled the entire main hall. Linley only felt his body grow cold, and his legs were even turning soft. He felt like he had back then, when he was an infant and seeing the ‘Black Dragon’, a magical beast of the ninth rank, for the first time.

The difference between Deities and Sovereigns was simply too vast!

“Sovereign.” The nearby Beirut said hurriedly. “Can it be that you are unaware that a Sovereign of Wind and the Bloodridge Sovereign have already sought Linley? Linley has already sworn an oath by the Overgod of Fate, and the Bloodridge Sovereign himself testified that this was nothing more than a trap intended to harm Linley.”

“Boson and the others came as well?” The Starmist Sovereign's gaze fell upon Beirut.

“Yes, Sovereign.” Beirut hurriedly explained. “This news was transmitted by the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture, ‘Molde’. Just prior to this, Linley killed his most powerful divine clone. Molde was unable to take revenge, and so he came up with this idea. Otherwise, how could there be such a coincidence, that right after Linley killed his most powerful divine clone, he would immediately receive information about this Overgod talisman?”

“Molde...” The Starmist Sovereign knew that this information did indeed come from someone named Molde. “Does he want to die?” That low voice contained a hint of anger.

“Molde probably wanted to take revenge against Linley, even if it cost him his own life.” Beirut said hurriedly. “After losing his most powerful divine clone, Molde was no longer worth anything. But Linley is a Highgod Paragon. The difference between the two is simply too great. For Molde to be willing to trade his crippled life for Linley's life...it makes sense.”

“Where is Molde?” The Starmist Sovereign said coldly.

“He has already been executed by the Bloodridge Sovereign.” Beirut explained. “Both the Sovereign of Wind, Lord Teresia, and the Bloodridge Sovereign were angered by this. Linley wanted to go pursue and kill Molde, but Molde was the Emissary of the Bloodridge Sovereign, after all. In the end, it was the Bloodridge Sovereign who personally killed him.”

The Starmist Sovereign was silent, and he stared at Linley.

Linley felt tremendous pressure from this Sovereign's gaze.

Suddenly...

The Starmist Sovereign frowned as he looked towards the main hall's door. A blurry figure suddenly took shape, transforming into the appearance of the Bloodridge Sovereign.

"Boson, you came?" The Starmist Sovereign said.

The Bloodridge Sovereign smiled, then bowed slightly. Laughing while walking over, he said, "Of course I came. You came to my territory; how could I not come to accompany you? Shinji [Xing'yi]. It seems as though the Overgod talisman truly is quite alluring. Previously, Teresia also chased after Linley and wanted to force Linley to hand it over. Linley had no other choice but to swear an oath by the Overgods."

And then, the Bloodridge Sovereign sat down as well.

The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed as he looked at Linley and Beirut. "Don't worry. The Starmist Sovereign isn't like that madman, Teresia."

"Enough." The Starmist Sovereign couldn't help but glance sideways at the Bloodridge Sovereign. "Since Linley has already sworn by the Overgods, and with you bearing witness on his behalf...I trust what you have said. But Boson...your Emissary, 'Molde', actually dared to falsely generate news like this? There are only waves when the wind blows; I imagine that the Overgods might have truly issued a mission."

The Bloodridge Sovereign nodded. "It makes sense. But if there really was such a mission, we have to at least see one of the three Overgod talismans, right? The most important thing is the Overgod decree. The Overgod decree described the requirements of the mission, but the information on the decree was clearly altered. This is because even if there is an Overgod mission, there is no way the Overgod decree would have information on who is carrying one of the talismans."

The Starmist Sovereign nodded.

Suddenly...

"Rumble..." The Starmist Sovereign's terrifying divine sense suddenly swept out...

"Shinji, why did you use your divine sense to cover the entire Infernal Realm?" The Bloodridge Sovereign said, surprised.

Hearing this, Linley felt his heart shudder. Cover the entire Infernal Realm? The distance one's divine sense could reach was related to the strength of one's soul and the power of one's Will. Linley was only able to stretch to eight million kilometers or so, and that was because his spiritual energy was especially strong. But Sovereigns? They were able to cover the entire Infernal Realm.

One could imagine how much stronger the Will of Sovereigns was, compared to his own Will.

No wonder once a Sovereign came in person to deal with a Paragon, that Paragon would have to die. Unless, of course, the Paragon had already fled and avoided encountering the Sovereign, instead fleeing into a material plane.

"Naturally, we have to discuss this matter with the other Sovereigns of the Infernal Realm. Otherwise, every ten years or every few centuries, another one of them will arrive. And we don't know for sure whether or not this news is real or not." The Starmist Sovereign said calmly.

Linley's heart lurched. "A discussion with every single Sovereign of the Infernal Realm?"

The distant Redbud Continent, the eastern Jedefloat Continent, the vast Chaotic Sea...

The Sovereigns, scattered across the distant lands, were now all connected through divine sense.

"Shinji, why have you reached out to everyone?" Deep in the distant Chaotic Sea, an incredibly powerful presence spoke, with the voice echoing in the minds of every single Sovereign present.

"Chief, I have reached out to everyone because news has spread within the Infernal Realm regarding Overgod talismans. Soon, you will all learn of this, which is why I thought it best to reach out to you all directly to discuss this." The Starmist Sovereign's voice echoed in the minds of the other Sovereigns as well.

Sovereigns were capable of covering the entire plane with their divine sense. There was no need for them to gather together to converse at all.

"Overgod talisman?" A cry of surprise and delight. This voice came from the Sovereign of the Muja Continent.

"The Overgods have issued another mission?"

"What is the mission?"

Multiple voices echoed out in succession.

But of course, only Sovereigns were able to hear this. Even Linley and the others weren't able to hear it.

"Hmph. This news originated from that Emissary of Boson's." The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, spoke out. The Four Higher Planes, including the Infernal Realm, were all far larger than the other Divine Planes, which was why many other Sovereigns lived here as well.

The Infernal Realm wasn't restricted to just the Sovereigns of Destruction.

For example, there might be one or two Sovereigns of Wind, Earth, or Fire living here. And thus, the Sovereigns currently engaging in this discussion included those of other elements as well.

"Everyone." The Bloodridge Sovereign immediately spoke out. "I am very sorry. This news truly did originate from an Emissary under my control, 'Molde'. Based on my investigations, he wanted to gain revenge after his most powerful divine clone was killed by a Paragon, and so he came up with this lie. Teresia and I have already looked into this. This indeed is nothing more than a joke."

"Who is the Paragon?" A clear voice echoed in each Sovereign's mind.

"His name is Linley, the Paragon of the Four Divine Beasts clan." Teresia's voice rang out.

"Linley?" A soft, graceful voice rang out. This voice originated from the powerful figure who resided within the Amethyst Mountains. "Linley and I have a bit of a connection to each other. He has only been training for a few thousand years, but he is indeed a genius; he has already reached the level of Paragon."

"Paragon?"

"He became a Paragon after just a few thousand years? Impossible!!!"

"I also am aware of someone named Linley who has become a Paragon. I was watching during the final battle of the Planar Wars. He defeated Magnus. But, I had no idea that he had been training for just a few thousand years."

One voice after another rang out from locations spread throughout the vast Infernal Realm. The Sovereigns chatted amongst themselves, all of them quite stunned.

After all, even most of the Sovereigns had yet to become Paragons. Most Sovereigns were powerful lifeforms that were formed by the natural world shortly after the universe was created. The reason they were able to become Sovereigns was a matter of luck and power; it had almost nothing to do with whether or not they were able to become Paragons.

In their hearts, quite a few Sovereigns felt admiration for those who were able to become Paragons.

After all, becoming a Paragon was completely related with one's abilities, while becoming a Sovereign was more a matter of luck and fortune.

"Linley just returned a short time ago from the Planar Wars. Perhaps he had a grudge against that person named Molde, and so he killed Molde's most powerful divine clone. Molde didn't have the power to get revenge, and so he came up with this idea." This was the Redbud Sovereign's judgment. "Linley spent only a few thousand years to become a Paragon, and the Overgod talismans are useless to him. I imagine that he wouldn't be so stupid as to try and hide the Overgod talismans."

"True." The Bloodridge Sovereign's voice rang out. "Linley, before Teresia, swore an oath. Teresia, am I right?"

Teresia's voice didn't immediately ring out in response. Only after some time did he reply, "Yes. Linley swore an oath by the Overgods that before I told him about this, he knew nothing at all regarding the Overgod talismans."

"I need to tell you one more thing, everyone." The Bloodridge Sovereign concluded. "This news came on a sheet of ordinary paper, not an Overgod decree."

"No Overgod decree? Why are we even discussing this?"

"Without an Overgod decree present, even if an Overgod talisman was placed in front of us, we probably wouldn't be able to ascertain if it is an Overgod talisman or not. The natural world can give birth to some unique items as well."

Quite a few Sovereigns chatted about this, clearly believing this to be nothing more than a joke.

Teresia's voice rang out. "But this piece of paper did describe three items."

"Only the descriptions on an Overgod decree can be truly believed. Teresia... what, just based on your power, you want to get involved as well? Even if an Overgod truly issues a mission, given your strength, I imagine if you get involved, the end result will simply be that you will fall." A deep voice echoed forth from the powerful figure located in the distant Karol Continent.

Teresia fell silent.

This was because the Sovereign who said that was far more powerful than him.

"That Molde, he truly was daring." This voice came from the Chaotic Sea. "However, for him to dare make such a claim means that while it may be true that he wanted to get revenge against Linley, even at the cost of his life... he might truly have received some information and might truly have seen the Overgod decree. Forget it. For now, let's not pay attention to this matter. Only when the Overgod decree appears in the world will there be proof that the Overgods have truly issued a mission."

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction's words were effective. As soon as his words came out, the other Sovereigns no longer said anything.

Within the main hall of Linley's estate. Linley just stood there to one side quietly. He knew that the Sovereigns were currently engaging in a conversation through divine sense.

"They are scattered throughout the Infernal Realm, and yet able to instantly chat amongst each other with divine sense. Truly terrifying." Linley sighed to himself.

Suddenly...

The Starmist Sovereign rose to his feet, and Linley hurriedly turned his attention towards him. The Starmist Sovereign glanced sideways at Linley, a rare hint of a smile on his face. "You become a Paragon after just a few thousand years? Linley...this is utterly inconceivable. Excellent, excellent." After speaking, the Starmist Sovereign disappeared.

Only now did Linley let out a sigh of relief.

"How did he know that I became a 'Paragon' after a few thousand years?" Linley was puzzled.

Very few people, even amongst the Four Divine Beasts clan, knew how long he had been training for. Only a few people he was on particularly good terms with, such as Reisgem, knew this.

"Haha, a Paragon after only a few thousand years." The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed as he looked at Linley. "This news came from the Redbud Sovereign. Linley, I imagine that within a short period of time, the Sovereigns of the various major planes will all know this. Alright, this affair of yours is now concluded. You don't have to worry about more Sovereigns coming to search for you."

"Thank you, Sovereign." Linley bowed as he spoke gratefully.

Linley knew that the Bloodridge Sovereign was clearly standing on his side, and had most likely spoken out on his behalf as the other Sovereigns had discussed this. Without this Sovereign helping out, most likely, other Sovereigns would have come to make trouble for him long ago.

"You can leave for now. There's something I wish to discuss with Beirut." The Bloodridge Sovereign said.

"Yes." Linley immediately retreated, leaving behind only Beirut and the Bloodridge Sovereign in the main hall.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 19,

Parchment

Linley walked out of the main hall, then walked past the corridor to arrive at the empty grassy area.

He took a deep breath, feeling the gentle wind blow against him. A smile appeared on Linley's face, as though he had been released of a heavy burden. "Molde actually struck such a blow at me before dying. It really did cause endless problems. However, now that the various Sovereigns have discussed it, this matter should come to an end. Unless that third talisman appears, or the Overgod decree appears!"

"Boss!" Bebe ran over, surprised and delighted.

"Father." Taylor, Sasha, and the others all walked over from far away as well.

Linley looked at his family and friends. "No matter what, the Overgod talisman is something which will attract the interest of Sovereigns. Because of the news Molde spread, the Sovereigns have all come to make trouble for me. But they shouldn't be so shameless as to go pressure my family." Since ancient days to the present days, there had never been, as far as Linley was aware of, a case of a Sovereign going to go apply pressure to the family members of a Deity.

"Boss, everything fine?" Bebe walked before Linley.

"Bebe, look at Third Bro's face. You should know just looking at him." Yale laughed.

"Where is my Grandpa Beirut? He's in the main hall by himself?" Bebe said, confused.

"He's discussing something secret with the Bloodridge Sovereign." Linley said.

Bebe and Yale were all shocked. Bebe said, "The Bloodridge Sovereign came as well?" Nobody else had seen the Bloodridge Sovereign arrive, because the Bloodridge Sovereign had directly created an energy clone within the main hall. Thus, the people outside had no idea.

"Your Grandpa Beirut is coming." Linley laughed as he spoke to Bebe. Beirut was currently walking out of the main hall, a smile on his face.

After coming out, Beirut locked his gaze upon Linley, then walked over.

"Grandpa." Bebe went to welcome him.

Beirut laughed as he rubbed Bebe's head, then looked at Linley. Laughing, he said, "Everything is resolved, Linley. I have some business to attend to. I'll leave now." After speaking, Beirut then actually spoke to Linley through divine sense. "Linley, remember, regardless of whether or not you acquired those nine soul pearls, do not admit it. If you acquired it, make sure you hide it safely."

Beirut's divine sense caused Linley to be badly startled.

"Lord Beirut?" Linley sent back in surprise. Linley felt gratitude towards Beirut, and also viewed Beirut as he would an elder member of his own family.

Beirut had that smile on his face, but his mental message was solemn. "Don't worry about anything else. If you didn't acquire it, that's fine, but if you did, you have to hide it. Don't admit it, even if someone threatens

to kill you! As long as you do that, you'll be fine." After sending his message, Beirut chortled as he said a few words to everyone, then left on his own.

Linley watched as Beirut left, the puzzlement in his heart becoming all the stronger.

"What did Lord Beirut intend by these words? He shouldn't know that I have the Overgod talisman, but his words..." Linley didn't understand.

Time flowed on.

In the blink of an eye, a century passed.

In the past hundred years, Linley had used his divine water clone to relax and accompany his family members, while his other three divine clones, along with his original body, focused painstakingly on their training. He had long since begun to train in the sixth profound mystery in the Elemental Laws of Fire, but unfortunately, this sixth profound mystery was the most mysterious, most powerful 'Explosion' profound mystery. Linley's training speed was thus exceedingly slow.

The Profound Mysteries of Explosion...they were like the explosion of a volcano. A large amount of power would be collected, then instantly released. Its power was tremendous.

For example, Bluefire was able to move about as though he were teleporting, and his soul attacks and material attacks could be described as supreme. This had to do with the Profound Mysteries of Explosion. Although profound mysteries were easily described, once one advanced deeper into them and tried to completely master them, they would become incredibly difficult to understand.

His training in the Elemental Laws of Fire was slow.

But the path of fusing the Laws of the four elements was even slower. The Profound Mysteries of Circular Softness of the Laws of Water and the Throbbing Pulse of the World of the Laws of the Earth were fused, but Linley's speed dropped drastically after that. He wasn't able to make any advances at all.

"Whooooosh."

The wind howled. Snowflakes covered the skies.

The Skyrise Mountains seemed to be dressed in a layer of silver finery, appearing so dreamlike and beautiful. The number of patrolling guards around the Four Divine Beasts clan had dropped dramatically as well. This was because they now had a Paragon guarding them. Who would dare come make trouble for them? Naturally, there was no need to have so many guards standing about on alert.

The Skyrise Mountains. Dragon Avenue. A few sparse gatherings of guards could still be seen here.

A metallic lifeform, shaped like an enormous hammer, was flying over from far away. It came to a halt outside the perimeter of the Skyrise Mountains and the domain of the Four Divine Beasts clan, then vanished, revealing a tall, large figure. This person was 2.5 meters tall. He was dressed in long black trousers, while his upper body was covered with nothing more than a tunic, revealing his muscular arms.

His red hair was only an inch in length, but appeared as hard as nails.

"Who is it?" One squad of the guards of the Azure Dragon clan flew over.

The muscular man laughed and said, "Go inform your Elder Linley that his old friend, Mosi, has come." This voice was very soft, and was quite comfortable to listen to. It didn't appear the slightest bit brash or uncouth.

Those guards all looked at each other.

An old friend of Elder Linley's? They, too, could tell that this newcomer had a remarkable aura.

"Please wait a moment. I will go make the report." One of the guards said, then immediately turned and flew towards the Skyrite Mountains.

"Who is Mosi? Have you heard of him?"

"By the looks of it, he should be a powerful expert. A friend of Elder Linley's...he should be a commander or a Lord Prefect level expert."

Those guards all secretly chatted through divine sense regarding this big fellow in front of them. There had been countless experts who had come to visit Linley in recent years, and these guards all knew...that none of these guests were people the likes of them could offend. Thus, the guards were all quite well-behaved to those who came to see Linley.

A long time later.

"Haha, Mosi!" Laughter rang out as two figures flew over from far away.

Mosi took a close look, then laughed as well. "Linley, long time no see."

The two were Linley and that earlier patrol guard. Linley, upon learning that Mosi had come, hurriedly went in person to welcome him. Laughing, he said, "Long time no see indeed. Mr. Mosi, come, let's chat inside." Mosi immediately advanced with Linley, shoulder-to-shoulder, through Dragon Avenue. Together, they flew deeper into the mountains.

"It has been two thousand years since we met, but I never would have imagined that you, who had been only a God, would have become a Paragon. Upon hearing this news, I didn't dare believe it." Mosi chortled. "Only after this was verified to me by my Sovereign did I believe it. I truly admire you."

Mosi was an extremely powerful Purgatory Commander of the Infernal Realm.

Linley had only learned some time later, from Beirut's materials, how powerful Mosi was!

Mosi himself trained in the Edicts of Destruction and the Edicts of Fate. In addition, he had reached an exceedingly, terrifyingly powerful level in both these Edicts. As far as the Edicts of Death went, Mosi himself was very nearly at the very peak of perfect, just a tiny step away from becoming a Paragon. Mosi was able to easily mentally dominate Seven Star Fiends!

The number of people capable of doing this in the Infernal Realm could be counted on one hand.

Even if Linley truly did become a Paragon in the Laws of the Earth, he wouldn't be able to accomplish this. After all, each Law had its own specialties; experts of the Edicts of Death were skilled in the soul.

As for 'Destruction', because Mosi was of the Bloodrune Titan lineage, he was innately gifted in Destruction. In the past, Mosi had used a hammer to effortlessly defeat and send feeling 'Lomio', someone who was very nearly at the Asura level. And that was with Mosi not having used his supreme technique!

He was very nearly at the peak of perfection in both material and spiritual attacks.

It could be said that aside from Paragons, Mosi was invincible. No wonder, in the past, the Bloodrune Titan clan was able to effortlessly set up 'Miluo Island' and develop it into a city which none dared to cause trouble for. What could you do? How could any ordinary Lord Prefects be a match for Mosi?

“I only managed to make my breakthrough due to luck, and it nearly cost me my life.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“I, too, dream of becoming a Paragon. But this last step...there’s nothing I can do about it.” Mosi shook his head and laughed.

While laughing and chatting, the two entered Linley’s residence. Because Mosi wasn’t too familiar with the others, Linley gave a simple introduction of the more important members of the residence, then led Mosi into the living room. Mosi and Linley began to chat privately.

Mosi was a very smooth speaker, and as they chatted and laughed, he made Linley’s opinion of him grow.

“Linley, after having chatted with you for so long, I almost forgot about the reason why I came here today.” Mosi said with a smile.

“Oh? What is it?” Linley said, surprised.

He had thought Mosi had come to reminisce with him. But now, it seemed, there was a special reason for the trip.

“Look at this.” Mosi waved his hand, and a sheet of black paper appeared. “This was sent to me by a Highgod warrior. Upon seeing this news, I immediately had a bad feeling! I felt as though someone is trying to harm you, which is why I dominated that Highgod. Only then did I learn that this was all arranged by Molde.”

Linley’s eyes lit up. “This is the paper which Molde sent to be delivered?” Linley hurriedly accepted it.

Linley wanted very much to learn what this piece of paper described. Back then, he had asked Beirut, but unfortunately, Beirut didn’t have a copy of it either. Molde had only sent his subordinates to the other six regions. As for the Bloodridge Continent...he didn’t give it to any other Lord Prefects or commanders.

“The information on this paper is clearly meant to kill you. That is why I immediately hurried over to deliver it.” Mosi said solemnly.

It would have taken quite some time for that Highgod warrior to travel from the Bloodridge Continent to Miluo Island, and then more time for Mosi to hurry over. One could understand why so much time had passed.

Linley carefully read through the information on this paper.

“Three talismans...the nine soul pearls, the pentametal crown, and the red caltrop diamond. These three Overgod talismans will join together into the ‘Crown of Life’?” Linley’s eyes lit up. “Once these three talismans fuse together and the Crown of Life forms, one can then offer it to the Overgod of Life and make a request of the Overgod of Life.”

That was the most important bit of information included on the paper.

At the same time, it also included descriptions of these three Overgod talismans.

“So that tattered crown was this so-called ‘pentametal crown’? Three talismans...I already have two of them.” Linley rejoiced in his heart. “Now, I only lack for one thing. The red caltrop diamond.”

The red caltrop diamond was a blood-red, caltrop-shaped diamond.

As for what special power it had, this piece of paper didn’t say.

This piece of paper also said that the Overgod decree which had information about these three talismans, as well as the nine soul pearls (the first of the Overgod talismans), were in the hands of Linley, of the Four Divine Beasts clan of the Indigo Prefecture!

“I’ve never seen the Overgod decree.” Linley mused to himself. “But of the three talismans, I already have two of them. If I were to acquire the third, then I would be able to make a request of the Overgod of Life.”

“Make a request of the Overgod of Life?” Linley couldn’t help but mumble to himself.

Suddenly...

“Bang!”

A light suddenly flashed in Linley’s mind, and his eyes lit up.

Mosi, by Linley’s side, couldn’t help but laugh at Linley’s shock. “I know a little bit regarding the Overgod missions. Over the course of countless years, the Overgods have issued several missions. I also seem to recollect that each time a Sovereign succeeded, the Sovereign requested an ‘Overgod artifact’, which the Overgods agreed to provide.”

The Overgods would satisfy any request.

“The Overgod of Life is the manifestation of the Edicts of Life, which control the lives and destinies of the countless living creatures of the multiverse! The Sovereigns aren’t able to save Grandpa Doebling, but it is very possible that the Overgod of Life is.” Linley still clearly remembered what the Chief Sovereign of Death had said to him.

Once a person’s soul is scattered and dispersed, Sovereigns would be unable to rescue them.

Overgods?

Although she wasn’t sure, the Overgods, being the personifications of the Edicts, were simply too powerful. Perhaps they would be able to.

“Grandpa Doebling...” Countless scenes flashed past Linley’s mind.

On that day, a white-bearded, white-haired old man had flown out from his ring...

On that day, that bearded old man had guided him, a youth, into the Straight Chisel School of sculpting, allowing the youth to rise dramatically in power...

On that day, the bearded old man had given up his own life to execute a forbidden-level spell...

“Grandpa Doebling...” Linley, who had reached the very peak of power, felt his heart trembling. “As long as I am able to find the three talismans, I can make a request of the Overgod of Life. Now, I only lack for one thing. Just one thing! Grandpa Doebling, I, I will definitely bring you back to life. Definitely.”

Linley’s heart was aflame. His hopes were blazing!

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 20, After A Millennium, An Astonishing Change!

Many years ago, the Bloodridge Sovereign had executed Molde in the city of Lucliffe, within the Skymount Prefecture.

That disturbance had naturally drawn the attention of the governor of Lucliffe City, as well as many Highgods. But the Bloodridge Sovereign had only ordered the city governor to pay no attention to the matter. In addition, the Bloodridge Sovereign had completely disintegrated Molde's body. Given that the Sovereign had issued an order...naturally, no one in Lucliffe City dared to get any further involved in this matter.

And so, this matter came to an end.

Molde had been afraid that Linley would pursue and kill him, which was why he had privately snuck out and hidden himself within Lucliffe City. He had rented an estate there. Even after he had died, the soldiers of Skymount Prefecture naturally still believed that he was still perfectly fine and alive.

Skymount Prefecture. Molde's former estate. Many soldiers were stationed here.

The Blood Sun hung high in the sky. Suddenly, a bolt of lightning flashed through the skies, then halted in the air above the Lord Prefect's manor, transforming into a human figure. This person stood there in midair, his waist ramrod straight. Although he was a bit thin, a dominating aura wafted out from him. His head was covered with long black hair which casually undulated in the breeze, falling all the way to his waist.

On his back was a single warblade.

This person was the expert Linley had met in the Starmist Sea – Lomio. In the past, Lomio had had the terrifying power of a near-Asura level expert.

"This is the Lord Prefect's residence. Hurry and depart." A large number of prefectural soldiers flew over, with the leader shouting angrily towards Lomio.

Lomio actively spread out his aura, remaining in the air above the Lord Prefect's estate. He was clearly acting in a provocative manner.

Lomio swept the people beneath him with his gaze, then said calmly, "From today onwards, I, Lomio Bornesen, am the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture!" His voice echoed out like thunder, reverberating in the skies. The hundreds of thousands of soldiers stationed nearby, as well as some tribes located farther away, all heard his words clearly.

"Impudence!" An emaciated old man dressed in a black robe barked out in anger. "The Lord Prefect of our Skymount Prefecture is Lord Molde. If you wish to be the Lord Prefect, then you must follow the rules. First become a Seven Star Fiend, then issue the challenge."

The prefectural soldiers below were all angered as well.

Could a person become a Lord Prefect just because he said he was? To simply appear above the Lord Prefect's residence and declare one's self the Lord Prefect? This was utterly laughable.

"Rumble..."

A thick, black, terrifying surge of energy descended from the heavens, causing the prefectural soldiers below to be astonished. One of the soldiers in particular, that emaciated elder dressed in black robes, stared with a changed look on his face. “So much Sovereign power...”

And then, the Sovereign power that filled the heavens coalesced into an enormous face that was tens of meter high.

“Whoosh...”

The terrifying presence of a Sovereign.

“Sovereign.” All of the prefectural soldiers landed on the ground, kneeling and trembling.

“Sovereign.” Lomio landed on the ground and knelt as well.

“The previous Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture, Molde, committed a capital offense and has been executed. From today onwards, the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture shall be this ‘Lomio’ who stands before you.” A voice like thunder which rang in every person’s ears and mind. The aura and presence of the Sovereign pressed down on the terrified prefectural soldiers, and not a single one of them dared to raise their heads.

And then, that giant face, tens of meters high, suddenly vanished. The world once more returned to normal.

Only now did the prefectural soldiers dare to raise their heads. Upon seeing that the Sovereign had departed, they rose to their feet.

“We pay our respects to you, Lord Prefect.” The more nimble-minded of them hurriedly fell to one knee, paying their respects to Lomio.

“We pay our respect to you, Lord Prefect!” Instantly, the hundreds of thousands of other soldiers also fell down to one knee and called out in unison.

Lomio’s sharp, cold gaze swept across all of them, but a hint of a smile came unbidden to his face. After so many years of painstaking training, he had finally become a Lord Prefect. He was now one of the 108 Asuras of the Infernal Realm.

However, Lomio had been assigned to this position by the Sovereign. He hadn’t acquired it through the usual way of defeating the previous Lord Prefect, then assuming the position. Thus...quite naturally, many people weren’t convinced of Lomio’s power. One could imagine how, in the future, quite a few Seven Star Fiends would come challenge him.

“Come, then. The more, the merrier.” Lomio’s eyes were shining.

The Infernal Realm. The Karol Continent. A black, dragon-shaped metallic lifeform was flying above it.

“The Lord Prefect actually died! Didn’t that make our trip pointless?” Within the metallic lifeform, there were fifteen Highgods gathered together.

The ones who had gone to send the information to the Starmist Sea had made the trip in a fairly short period of time, but not a single group of the Highgod soldiers who had been sent to the Karol Continent had arrived yet. Actually, of the hundred Highgods, during the past century, only forty or so had successfully delivered the news. The others, especially those assigned to more distant locations, naturally weren’t able to make it in time.

Only after Lomio had arrived and then released the hundred divine clones of that were held hostage within the prefectural manor did these soldiers realize that Molde was dead.

“Molde’s dead. There’s no reward for us, even if we deliver the message. Brothers, let’s go. Time to go home.”

“We travelled for a century, but it was all for nothing.”

These soldiers clearly seemed quite disgruntled.

“Hey, how about we sell this news off? This information is still fairly important. If we sell it to the intelligence agents of the Fiend Castles, we will still receive a high price for it. Molde’s dead anyhow. He’s unable to kill us for leaking out this information.”

“Right. This news is definitely valuable.”

“This news even mentions Lord Linley. As I see it, Molde intended to harm Lord Linley.” These soldiers didn’t believe this news to be real.

Soon, those soldiers who had made a trip for nothing and who would never receive Molde’s promised reward came to a decision. They would sell off this astonishing information to the Fiend Castles. The Fiend Castles had many different departments; escort, assassination, treasure-hunting...and of course, they also bought intelligence reports and information.

After the Fiend Castles purchased this information, those soldiers who no longer feared Molde’s reprisals also informed the Fiend Castles that it was Molde who had instructed them to deliver this news to the various Lord Prefects and Sovereign’s Emissaries.

After acquiring this information, the Fiend Castles would naturally sell it off at a high price to the interested experts. Naturally, this news was quickly made known to the other experts of the Infernal Realm.

The vast majority of experts believed that Molde was trying to harm Linley.

But there were a few who believed it, and so they filled the lands in search of the three talismans, so as to be able to offer them to the Sovereigns and thus be rewarded.

Of course, this news also quickly made its way to the ears of the Sovereigns as well. But after the previous conference, the Sovereigns no longer paid much heed to this. And yet, at the same time...the Sovereigns were rather irritated. How could this sort of information be spread all over the place in such a manner? The Sovereigns instantly gave the order for the Fiend Castles to no longer sell this information.

And yet...

Since this information had already been publicized, the order of the Sovereigns came too late to do any good.

This didn’t have any impact on Linley. Linley’s life was still as tranquil and peaceful as ever. However, the many descendants Linley had brought over from the Yulan Plane, after having spent centuries in the Infernal Realm, were beginning to grow restless.

The Infernal Realm had too many experts.

Most of the descendants of the Baruch clan were merely Saints. After the Ancestral Baptism, they became Demigods. In the Infernal Realm, the only thing they could do was be abused.

By relying on the power of the Four Divine Beasts clan, the descendants of the Baruch clan from the Yulan continent were able to wander around a few of the cities of the Infernal Realm. However, they found life to be boring, and many still decided to return to the Yulan continent. Linley didn’t stop them, and by relying on the Sovereign’s insignia, he was able to send a group of them back.

In the blink of an eye, a thousand years had passed since Mosi had delivered him that information.

A thousand years, to Deities, wasn't much.

During these thousand years, Linley had advanced quite a bit in his four Laws. He had managed to begin fusing the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the 'Dimensional Attack' profound mysteries of the Laws of the Wind. In fact, he was halfway through fusing them. He had also begun to fuse the 'Dimensional Attack' mystery and the 'Circular Softness' mystery of the water. Only, he had yet to completely master either of these two fusions.

As for fire...

His training speed in fire truly was slow, and the more he trained, the slower it went. He had spent a thousand years after mastering the first five profound mysteries of the Laws of Fire, and had spent that entire time training in the Profound Mysteries of Explosion, and yet still hadn't mastered it.

The Skyrite Mountains. Linley's estate.

Beneath a thick, gnarled, twisted willow tree that was within a courtyard. This green willow tree had been living for more than eight hundred years, and its myriad branches drooped down and danced about, appearing so beautiful.

"Yale, although you became a Deity through fusing with a divine spark, don't give up. Perhaps someone who fused with a divine spark also has a chance of fusing profound mysteries. Look at me. I don't have any confidence in my ability to fuse profound mysteries, and yet...I, Bebe, still ended up fusing two of them, right? Haha." Bebe's loud laughter could be heard coming from below the willow tree.

Beneath the willow tree, there was a black wooden table, with three people around it. These three were Bebe, Yale, and Wharton.

"I don't have such extravagant hopes." Yale chortled. "Look at me. I'm a Highgod now. Although I reached this level through fusing with divine sparks, the difference between where I am at now and where I was at back at the Ernst Institute is as great as the difference between the heavens and the earth. What's more, I've already reformed the Dawson Conglomerate, and we have a huge pile of descendants. I'm satisfied. Haha, the only thing left for me now is to enjoy life. I'll occasionally go to some material planes and undergo a few simple adventures. I'm just a Highgod who fused with divine sparks, but in the material planes, I have nothing to fear. And...I even have the 'Sovereign's Might' which Third Bro gave me.

After becoming a Deity, he had gone back to the Yulan continent and lived there for over two centuries.

During the course of those two centuries, Yale had sired nineteen sons and daughters. By relying on the power of the Baruch Empire, he had effortlessly reconstructed the Dawson Conglomerate. His nineteen sons and daughter had carried on his work, and the Dawson Conglomerate once more flourished. And then, bored, Yale had taken his third wife with him and returned to the Infernal Realm.

But of course, that time, Yale had been quite unlucky; while holding the Sovereign's medallion, he had to go from the Yulan continent to the Infernal realm, then back, eight times in a row before arriving at the Bloodridge Continent.

Teleportation was free for holders of the Sovereign's medallion, after all.

"Yale, Bebe...I wonder how long it will be before I, too, will go to some other material planes for a stroll." Wharton laughed while musing to himself.

Beirut had given Linley a Sovereign's medallion, but hadn't taken it back. Since Linley didn't use it, he let Bebe and Wharton often borrow it.

“Why the rush? Next time, we’ll let the Boss take us all together.” Bebe said.

Just as they were chatting...

“Rumble...” A surge of rippling power, born from the natural Laws, descended. The location was somewhere within Linley’s estate.

Bebe, Wharton, and Yale all immediately rose to their feet.

“That’s coming from the place where Third Bro is training...” Yale said hurriedly.

“Haha, the Boss made a breakthrough. The Boss’ divine fire clone has finally reached mastery as well.” Bebe called out in celebration.

It was exactly as Bebe had said. Linley’s divine fire clone had, indeed, made a breakthrough.

Red light was currently bathing the entire room.

The long, brown-haired Linley was currently seated in the meditative position, but next to him floated a Linley with long, fiery red hair. A black gemstone, covered with fiery red light, was floating above this Linley’s head. It was his divine fire spark. Dense amounts of fire-type elemental essences swirled around the divine spark, carrying within them the Laws of the natural world.

Moments later...

“Finally. Success.” Linley, seated in the meditative position, opened his eyes. His divine fire clone entered his body.

“My divine fire clone really was far slower than the other clones in training. Fortunately, since my divine fire clone was able to share energy from my other four souls, it slowly transformed as well, making my training speed much faster. Otherwise, I probably wouldn’t have broken through and mastered a sixth profound mystery this quickly.” Linley rose to his feet, his face wreathed in smiles. “By using three types of divine power, my strength is comparable to when I use Sovereign power. Then with four types...?”

Linley was finally able to begin testing out the feeling of using four fused types of divine power.

His heart was filled with eagerness. His face all smiles, Linley fused his power...and upon doing so, his face froze.

“Crackle...” A bizarre sound rang out from Linley’s body, and all the muscles of his body turned taut.

His azure-golden draconic scales suddenly emerged, and spikes appeared on his forehead and his spine. That metallic, whip-like draconic tail trembled and emerged as well, and a terrifying energy roiled about Linley’s entire body.

“This...this is utterly unbelievable.” Linley’s eyes were filled with astonishment.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 21,

Four Divine Powers Fuse

Savage pain wracked Linley's entire body. It felt as though countless little bugs were gnawing away at him. That bone-deep pain was so great that even someone like Linley wasn't able to endure it expressionlessly. All he could do was to grit his teeth and struggle to endure it. At the same time, Linley's divine sense filled each part of his body.

Pure darkness, which didn't contain a hint of anything else.

A dark flood swirled about throughout Linley's body. There was no rhythm or order to it. The large tide of black energy filled every single muscle, every single blood vessel, every single bone. Those specks of black energy seemed to have found their 'home' as they sank into his bones, muscles, and organs, causing every single part of Linley's body to undergo a heaven-shaking transformation.

"Rumble..."

All of his bones were trembling to the point of emitting clattering sounds.

"The fusion of four types of profound power actually results in this pure black color. This black divine power is actually this much more powerful than Sovereign power!" Linley hadn't expected this either.

Prior to this, for Linley, using the fusion of three types of divine power had been comparable to using Sovereign power. But for example, although it was comparable to when Linley used Destruction-type Sovereign power, it was still significantly weaker than when Linley used earth-type Sovereign power.

As Linley saw it, the four-way fusion would result in a tenfold increase in power, making it so that it would only be a few times stronger than when he used earth-type Sovereign power.

But now that he had actually fused four types of divine power, a remarkable, unique transformation had occurred. Amazingly, it had transformed into this pure black color, and Linley could clearly sense how powerful this black energy was.

Despite the passage of countless years, no person had ever possessed four divine bodies and still successfully undergone a soul mutation!

Linley had succeeded, and thus he was able to fuse four types of divine power.

Earth, fire, water, wind; the fusion of these four types of divine power gave birth to this 'black divine power'. And it was so powerful as to make Linley tremble.

Suddenly...

The azure-golden scales covering Linley's body began to be covered with fine lines of black energy. Even his spikes were being covered. The black lines criss-crossed his draconic scales, his spikes, his draconic tail, and even dug deep into his body. Anyone looking at Linley would feel as though Linley's entire body was covered with a large amount of black runes.

"Rumble..."

The draconic scales on Linley's body were shuddering. Because the frequency of the shuddering was very high, they emitted a rumbling sound, causing even spatial ripples to occur.

"How could this black divine power have such a bizarre effect?" Although his entire body was wracked with pain, Linley, having trained to the peak of power, was able to maintain complete clarity of thought. He could clearly sense that every part of his entire body was transforming. His muscles were strengthening at an astonishing rate, and his bones were rising in hardness repeatedly.

This terrifying rate of advancement caused even Linley to be terrified.

"According to legend, the ancestor of my Azure Dragon clan, the 'Azure Dragon', was able to use Sovereign power to strengthen his body, to the point where it was comparable to a Sovereign artifact. Most likely, this was because water-type Sovereign power and his own water-type divine beast body was a perfect match. As for the fusion of these four types of divine power, they too are strengthening my body. This sort of strengthening feels similar to when one uses divine power to nurture a divine artifact."

Linley knew a few simple ways by which one could strengthen one's body.

The fundamental underpinning of strengthening one's body was simply to allow one's body to constantly absorb energy and constantly grow strong. But although this was easy to describe, the amount of energy needed was tremendous. How could one completely absorb it? This was difficult. This was partially related to innate abilities; for example, divine beasts like Godeater Rats and Azure Dragons all had their own ways to strengthen their bodies.

Clearly, this fusion of four types of divine power also had the special effect of strengthening one's body.

When cultivating a divine artifact, what one actually did was to constantly absorb divine power into the artifact, slowly making it harder and sharper. At the same time, one would infuse it with some spiritual energy, so as to slowly give it sentience.

"Eh?" Linley sent his divine sense into his body. He discovered that beneath his skin, a special change was beginning to occur. The same was true for his draconic scales.

"It seems as though this strengthening process should take a fairly long period of time."

Linley understood that actually, this strengthening process could be completely guided by the strength of his spiritual energy. If, however, he allowed the fused divine power to strengthen his body as it pleased...what would the results be?

"Father made his breakthrough. Why hasn't he emerged yet?" Taylor stared at the distant end of the corridor.

Generally speaking, after making a breakthrough, Linley would emerge from his study and walk into the wide, grassy expanse outside. If he were to do so, he would have to pass through this corridor. At this moment, aside from Taylor, others such as Bebe, Reynolds, and Yale were also paying attention to this corridor. Even Delia, along with her daughter 'Sasha', was staring at the corridor while chatting.

"Mother, can it be that Father's breakthrough was not in relation to his divine fire clone?" Sasha said softly.

"It should be his fire clone. Your father's other three divine clones reached the Highgod level long ago." Delia frowned as well. "But after making a breakthrough, he should come out."

Right at this moment...

"Delia." A clear voice echoed in Delia's mind.

"Linley, how are you doing?" Delia, surprised and delighted, conversed with him through divine sense.

“I have indeed made a breakthrough, but right now, I am in the process of gaining some insights into strengthening my body and am currently analyzing them. Thus...for now, I won’t come out. Don’t worry about it. As to this breakthrough, it can last anywhere from one year to a few decades, or even a century.” Linley was worried that his friends and family would be concerned, and so sent a message out through divine sense.

“Alright. Focus on your training.” Delia was actually quite happy. After all, Linley hadn’t made many improvements in the past thousand years.

Delia laughed as she looked at everyone present. “Enough, everyone. All of you, hurry up and take care of your own affairs. Linley is still training.”

“He’s still in the midst of training?” Bebe mumbled.

“I was hoping that Third Bro would come out and go on a stroll with us.” Yale stretched lazily, then sat back down, resting his legs atop the table and speaking in a casual manner.

“Do you think Third Bro is as lazy and bored as you?” Reynolds mocked.

But enough of them for now. Linley, in his room, was completely absorbed in the process of his entire body being strengthened. In addition, through his powerful spiritual energy, he was able to guide the process and direction of this strengthening. On the very first day, Linley’s body strengthened to a ridiculous amount, but as time went on, the strengthening speed slowed as well.

Still, although it slowed, that was just in comparison to the first day. In reality, each day, Linley’s body was growing stronger. If others knew how much his body was strengthening by, most likely they would stare with blank gazes.

Nearly ten years silently, soundless passed. During this period of time, Linley’s focus never wavered. He continued to focus on guiding and controlling the strengthening process, and as he did, he discovered better ways for strengthening himself. Slowly, as he tested more method, he managed to develop a body-strengthening method that was suitable for fused divine power and suited for his body.

In the mortal world, there were all sorts of battle-qi manuals.

But in the world of Deities, Deities only focused on analyzing the fundamental underpinnings; the Elemental Laws and the Natural Edicts. Those so-called ‘manuals’, to them, were nothing more than jokes. For example, Linley could come up with any sort of battle-qi manual he wanted!

Everyone understood this!

Even when it came to strengthening the body, there was no such thing as a secret manual. There were only techniques that were suited to one’s self. Only personalized, customized techniques were the best. Different bodies and lineages, different types of energy...they all had matching, effective training methods.

The method that was effective for the Azure Dragon wouldn’t necessarily be effective for Linley. After all, the energy within Linley’s body was this ‘black divine power’, formed from four different types of fused divine power, which had never before been seen since the creation of the multiverse.

“I’ve more or less mastered this process.”

Linley stood up.

At this moment in time, Linley’s body was covered with a layer of inky green scales. Actually, given the strengthening process of the black divine power, Linley’s draconic scales should be black in color. However,

Linley's original draconic scales were azure-golden, and so, after this transformation, they had become this inky green color. Linley's draconic scales had become even denser and even more tightly clustered together.

If one drew close to Linley, one would discover...

That atop Linley's draconic scales, there was an exceedingly thin membrane of translucent muscles. These muscles were created by the flesh beneath Linley's skin, after Linley's draconic scales had been strengthened by his 'black divine power'. However, the muscles were so thin as to be translucent. If one was slightly farther away, one wouldn't be able to notice them at all.

As for the spikes covering Linley's forehead, spine, elbows, and knees...they could be said to have undergone the most dramatic changes.

This was because these spikes, incomparably sharp and hard to begin with, after the strengthening process, had become completely black! In addition, they had slightly shrunk just a little bit in size.

Linley's draconic claws...previously, his fingernails had been both long and sharp. They were retracted now. In Dragonform, Linley's hands were now completely black, and his fingernails just appeared a bit sharp. That was it.

The results of this strengthening process made it appear so that, from the outside, the savagery of the Dragonform had been somewhat reduced.

However, although the appearance was reduced in savagery, the power had increased greatly. The power of his body, compared to before, was much more than a hundred times or even a thousand times stronger!

"However, the greatest increase in power was still this..."

Smiling, Linley stretched out his right hand. Out of nowhere, a black longsword suddenly appeared. This was his godspark weapon. Mirage!

Divine power could be used to nurture a divine artifact. According to legend, Sovereign artifacts were thus formed by Sovereigns nurturing an artifact with Sovereign power. But of course, the creation of a Sovereign artifact also required a Sovereign to infuse it with his Will, which was why they reached such terrifying levels of power.

As for this godspark weapon, 'Mirage', it was made from incredibly powerful materials to begin with.

Most likely, even most Sovereign artifacts, in terms of material quality, were inferior to this godspark weapon. Over the past ten years, Mirage had been constantly nurtured by that black divine power, and it had constantly transformed as well. However, the amount of time needed for a divine artifact to be nurtured was very long.

"Mirage has yet to reach its limit. However, even now, I imagine Mirage isn't the slightest bit weaker than any Sovereign weapon." Linley had seen Sovereign artifacts before, which was why he was able to make this judgment.

Forget about Mirage; Linley felt that even his Dragonformed body should be close to Sovereign artifacts in power.

"I truly didn't imagine that a four-way fusion of divine power would have this sort of effect." Linley willed his draconic scales to disappear into his body, and then formed a set of inky-jade robes out of energy. Actually, after this strengthening process, Linley's skin and muscles alone were now far stronger than the draconic scales had been in the past, to say nothing of his current Dragonform.

“So four types of divine power, when fused, has this sort of effect. It makes sense...our ancestor, the Azure Dragon, was able to do this. It is only normal that I am also able to strengthen my body.”

Linley stretched out his right hand. With but a thought...

“Whoosh!” His hand transformed into a blade, and with a blade-chop, Linley casually swiped his arm forward in accordance with the principles of the ‘Dimensional Decapitator’.

“Rumble...” An enormous tear in space occurred.

“After this strengthening process, the power of my body has risen to a terrifying level. Even if I use simple profound mysteries, the power of my attacks is tremendous.” Linley finally was able to sense Beirut’s advantage for himself! His base power was simply too formidable. Even without needing to use too many profound mysteries, he was still powerful enough to be invincible.

Smiling, Linley pushed open the door to the hall.

Within Linley’s estate.

Linley walked out of the corridor, then stared towards the empty earth outside. Only ten or so figures were there.

Wharton, who was chatting casually with others, accidentally noticed Linley from the corner of his eyes. He immediately called out in surprised delight, “Big Bro.” At the same time, he hurriedly ran over. Wharton’s call attracted the attention of many people, and they all immediately ran over to watch, while at the same time engage in an excited chorus of shouts and cries. This caused the people in other rooms or even outside to be attracted over as well.

“Linley.” Delia, delighted, walked over.

“Haha, there should now be no further need for all five of my divine clones to remain in training.” Linley laughed calmly. This strengthening process didn’t just impact Linley’s original body; even his other four divine clones had been strengthened. Actually, although his other four divine clones were unable to Dragonform, their bodies were still incredibly powerful now.

Delia’s eyes couldn’t help but light up. If Linley didn’t stay in meditation, that meant he would have time to accompany her.

“Third Bro, I wanted to go out for a stroll for some time now. We’ve been waiting for you.” Yale chortled as he hugged his wife.

“Right. But Boss, you’ve always been training.” Bebe teased intentionally as well.

Linley began to laugh. “Haha, fine, then I’ll accompany you all on a stroll. However, to tell the truth, there are many places in the Infernal Realm that I haven’t been to. The Infernal Realm has quite a few unique places, you know. Let’s go...let’s wander throughout the entire Infernal Realm, and then go visit the material planes, one by one.”

After having reached the pinnacle of power for Deities, Linley was no longer under any pressure. He was more than happy to accompany his family in wandering the Infernal Realm and the various material planes.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 22, Real and Fake

Linley, Bebe, Reynolds, Yale, and their relatives had joined into a squad of nearly twenty people. Linley's group thus began their wanderings over the Infernal Realm.

They went to the mysterious depths of Lake Punisi...

They went to Firecrow Mountain, of the Takkak Mountains...

They occasionally made a detour to visit some Purgatory Commanders or Lord Prefects of the Infernal Realm...

However, the Infernal Realm was simply too vast. Despite having journeyed for dozens of years, Linley's group had only managed to travel from the western part of the Bloodridge Continent to the eastern part.

The eastern part of the Bloodridge Continent. Within the Fogmount Prefecture. Fogmount City.

The streets were teeming with people. Linley's group strolled forward while looking about.

Bebe's wife, 'Nisse', made a suggestion. "We've come to adventure in the Infernal Realms, but to be honest, the places with the most unique items are the Blacksand Castles. Let's go pay a visit to the local Blacksand Castle. There definitely will be countless queer items within it." Women loved to shop.

"Blacksand Castle is essentially a black market. It holds more items than the Bloodridge Castle does. Linley, let's go take a look." Delia's eyes lit up as well.

Bebe nodded hurriedly. "Let's go straight to the Blacksand Castle, Boss, what do you say?"

Laughing, Linley nodded, then led them towards the Blacksand Castle.

The Blacksand Castles scattered throughout the Infernal Realm were all identical. They appeared to be made from flowing black sand. Although the surface of every single Blacksand Castle was covered with flowing black sand, the castles themselves had remained erect for countless years. Linley's group casually intermingled into the crowds and entered the Blacksand Castle.

The counters of Blacksand Castle were clearly teeming with more people than that of the Bloodridge Castle.

"There're quite a few little trinkets." The females all quite happily began to stroll about while purchasing some small trinket.

"The items on this floor are all ordinary merchandise items. Let's go higher up. The more precious items will be there." Linley advised.

The first floor of the Blacksand Castle contained items that were worth ten thousand inkstones or less. The items on the second floor were worth a million inkstones or less. As for the third floor, the items there were worth more than a million inkstones. And this was just a general range. Still, Blacksand Castles were most famous for their fourth floors!

The items on the fourth floor were truly rare curious. Some were valuable, others weren't.

The precious items of the Redbud Castles and Bloodridge Castles were all real items, and thus the prices were clear as well.

But Blacksand Castle was ‘a black market’, after all. First of all, the prices would thus be lower than places like the Bloodridge Castles. And yet, many of the sellers of Blacksand Castle were all private sellers. Blacksand Castle made no guarantee regarding the authenticity of the items within. This was a matter for the buyer to determine.

Linley’s group finally arrived at the fourth floor.

“The countless curios of the fourth floor are divided into costly and cheap items. The most important thing is one’s judgment. In addition, one can bargain.” Nisse laughed while speaking. “If you end up being tricked into buying a useless item for an astronomical price, all you can do is blame yourself. But if you have a good eye and are able to buy a precious item for a low cost, then you’ll have made a fortune.”

Linley’s interest was roused by Nisse’s words.

“Come, let’s take a look at what treasures are here.” Linley laughed as he walked towards the nearest counter.

“Amusing.” Linley looked at many of the items and their listed prices, then secretly laughed. Given Linley’s spiritual energy, he was able to gauge the authenticity of these items with fairly good accuracy.

Bebe followed behind Linley as well.

“Hey, Boss, what sort of rock is this rock of yours?” Bebe pointed at a black rock on the counter that was tinged with a hint of blood and which faintly emanated a fiery aura. Linley gave a glance at it. This stone’s listed price was five million inkstones, an astonishing price.

The person responsible for this counter was a fairly skinny, white-haired elder who was wearing a felt cap. He gave Bebe a sideways glance with his faint blue eyes, then said coldly, “This stone is tinged with a hint of the blood of the fire-type divine beast, the ‘Vermillion Bird’ of the legendary Four Divine Beasts.”

“Vermillion Bird?” Linley was startled, and then he laughed involuntarily.

If this truly was the blood of the divine beast ‘Vermillion Bird’, then even five hundred million inkstones would be a low price for it, to say nothing of five million! In addition, Linley had noticed that although the aura emanating from this stone was strong, there was no way it could compare to that drop of Azure Dragon blood essence he had acquired in the past. The Vermillion Bird and the Azure Dragon were both divine beasts. The aura of their blood should be at the same level.

“Vermillion Bird? Don’t you know that the Vermillion Bird was a Sovereign?” Bebe pursed his lips. “Forget about divine beast Sovereigns; even a drop of blood from ordinary Sovereigns would contain ridiculous levels of power. This rock of yours was probably stained by the blood of an ordinary fire-type divine beast.” Bebe himself was a divine beast, and so naturally he could speak authoritatively on this subject.

The old man gave Bebe a sidelong glance, then said calmly, “The blood long since seeped deep into the stone. Thus, the aura it is emanating is very weak. If you don’t want to believe it, there’s nothing I can do. I’m not begging you to buy it.” The old man was putting on airs.

A weaker person might truly be hoodwinked by him.

“Let’s go.” Linley and Bebe continued onwards to other counters.

“Boss, there really are real and fake items here.” Bebe sighed in amazement while looking at the other items.

“Right.” Suddenly, Linley’s face changed. He saw an item located atop one of the counters, and his gaze focused on it intensely. This was a caltrop-shaped red gem, and it was quite eye-catching to behold.

“A red caltrop diamond? One of the three major talismans, the red caltrop diamond?” Linley was shocked. He felt his head grow dizzy and he looked at it carefully.

Of the three Overgod talismans, Linley had already acquired the ‘pentametal crown’ and the ‘nine soul pearls’; he now only lacked the red caltrop diamond.

“Good sir, are you interested in this red caltrop diamond?” The young, bald, silver-eyed caretaker of this counter laughed while speaking.

“I am interested.” Linley saw the price right away; a billion inkstones!

“A billion inkstones? You really dare to list a price like this?” Bebe, seeing this, let out a cry of surprise. A decent estate within a city was only a billion inkstones or so. Bebe weighed the bald, silver-eyed youth appraisingly, then snickered, “Tell me, what sort of treasure is this, that you value it at a billion inkstones?”

Linley had seen the black parchment, but Bebe had not. Thus, Bebe didn’t know about the red caltrop diamond.

The bald, silver-haired youth let out a low laugh. “The two of you, have you heard of the Overgod missions? One of them was to collect three talismans, which are the pentametal crown, nine soul pearls, and this red caltrop diamond. Although I dare not say that this is definitely the legendary red caltrop diamond, but look; this diamond definitely wasn’t man-made. There is a chance that it is the legendary Overgod talisman.”

“If it truly is a red caltrop diamond, why wouldn’t you offer it to the Sovereigns?” Bebe pursed his lips.

Linley laughed while looking at the youth as well.

“I’m just an ordinary Highgod. By what right would I ask for an audience with a Sovereign? In addition, I’m not certain as to whether or not it is real either.” The bald, silver-eyed youth said. “If I was certain of it, how could the price be merely a billion inkstones?”

It must be understood that drops of Sovereign’s Might started at ten billion inkstones.

An Overgod talisman, by contrast, would definitely be worth an astronomical sum. No amount of inkstones would be worth more than an Overgod talisman.

“Perhaps this red caltrop diamond of yours truly wasn’t forged by human hands.” Linley said.

“Of course.” The silver-eyed youth said.

“Would you dare allow me to try and give your red caltrop diamond a squeeze? If it doesn’t break, I will buy it. If it breaks, I won’t pay.” Linley pursed his lips, glancing at the silver-eyed youth. Given how powerful Linley’s spiritual energy was, he was able to see through to the corner of the red caltrop diamond long ago, and found that within it, there was a hint of fire-type elemental energy.

The Overgod of Life had issued three talismans. Linley was in possession of two of them.

The pentametal crown carried a surge of energy that was able to heal his wounds. The nine soul pearls were able to protect the soul. They were all Life-aligned.

Thus, this red caltrop diamond before him was definitely fake.

More importantly...

Linley held the pentametal crown, and so he knew the size of the 'caltrop-shaped setting'. Just based on the size of the setting alone, Linley was completely certain that although the caltrop being sold on the counter was quite similar, it was different; it was slightly larger.

There was nothing for it...

Lord Prefect Molde of Skymount Prefecture had never seen the red caltrop diamond himself either. He had only seen its appearance on the Overgod decree, and thus had drawn it out. It made sense that the size wouldn't be an exact match.

"No way." The silver-eyed youth let out a snort. "If you want to buy it, then buy it. If you don't, then forget it."

"The two of you, stop looking at that 'red caltrop diamond'. I have the pentametal crown here." A voice rang out from nearby.

Hearing these words, Linley couldn't help but laugh involuntarily. He turned his head to look. "You have the pentametal crown?"

"Of course. You decide whether it is the real one or not." The speaker, a gold-haired youth, spoke with confidence.

Linley glanced at it sideways, then he couldn't help but feel astonished.

This pentametal crown was actually identical to his own pentametal crown; even the settings were completely identical! In fact, even the coloration of the pentametal crown was identical. As Linley looked at it, he felt as though he were looking at his own crown.

It must be understood that the scroll only had a picture of the talismans, and so there were some differences between the picture and the real thing. There was no way the colorations could be the same as the real item's colorations.

"This one is fake." Linley laughed calmly.

"Boor [Bu'er], stop trying to cheat people." The seller of the 'red caltrop diamond', that silver-eyed youth, snickered. "This person is clearly an expert. He clearly is quite insightful."

The silver-haired youth snorted.

"A few years ago, when your elder brother was here, he boasted to me about how he had once acquired the pentametal crown. I asked him where it had gone, and he said that while he was heading on a trip to sell some items, he was waylaid by bandits and lost his divine clone. He said that the pentametal crown was in his interspatial ring, which was shattered. And thus, the pentametal crown was lost!" The silver-eyed youth snickered. "I'm willing to boast as well. I can say that I acquired a talisman, then lost it."

"Who told you to believe it?" The golden-haired youth snickered back.

Linley, hearing this, had a sudden thought. He laughed, "I imagine this pentametal crown was made in accordance with the one your elder brother acquired, right?"

The golden-haired youth glanced at Linley in surprise, but didn't say anything.

"Bebe, let's go." Linley could tell from the look in the golden-haired youth's eyes that the youth's elder brother had indeed acquired the pentametal crown. "Only someone who had previously acquired the pentametal crown would be able to replicate it with such accuracy. Only, he said that the interspatial ring was shattered. How could the pentametal crown then have emerged from chaotic space?"

Linley's heart trembled.

"Can it be...that after an interspatial ring is shattered, the items within the ring aren't actually lost; they just return to chaotic space once more?" Linley mused to himself.

Linley's guess was correct.

Nothing would suddenly appear out of nowhere for no reason.

And nothing would something disappear into nowhere!

No matter where you were, once a spatial tear was created, anything that entered the tear would fall into chaotic space. If an interspatial ring was shattered, the contents of the shattered ring would also be swept into chaotic space. Only, virtually all items would be destroyed by the energy flows of chaotic space.

Only a small minority of items would survive.

For examples, Overgod talismans, the Overgod decree, Sovereign artifacts, divine sparks...even if they were in a shattered interspatial ring, they would simply fall into and be lost in chaotic space, rather than truly disappear.

If items in interspatial rings were truly disappear, then if an Overgod talisman was in an interspatial ring that was destroyed, didn't that mean that the Overgod mission would be uncompletable?

"Boss, there really are quite a few fake items here." Bebe mumbled.

"They are quite numerous. Still...the news about the Overgod missions have spread quite quickly. Even these merchants have begun to take advantage of it to make money." Linley laughed calmly. Linley had been planning to just casually stroll about, but after this latest experience, Linley had another thought.

"I need to do a thorough investigation in the Infernal Realm. Perhaps someone might have found the real red caltrop diamond, then sold it off as merchandise."

Linley understood that given how many fake red caltrop diamonds there were, most likely even if a real red caltrop diamond were to appear, few would believe it.

But Linley had two of the items at hand. He would be able to easily judge if the third was real or not.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 23, Red Caltrop Diamond

As Linley's group was leisurely romping its way through the Infernal Realm in a carefree manner. In the distant Muja Continent. The Goodson [Ke'de'seng] Mountains.

Night descended.

A nameless, mysterious mountain cave within the Goodson Mountains. A sloppy-looking man with long, loose hair was seated in the meditative position. In the darkness of the cave, his terrifying, scarlet eyes could still be seen.

“Allott [A'luo'te], I, Brodie [Bu'luo'di], swear that one day, I will make you die. Make you die!!!” A low growl emanated from the throat of this sloppy-looking man, filled with immeasurable anger. The sloppy-looking man's fists were clenched so hard that they shook.

The sloppy-looking man swallowed his anger, then slammed a fist against the stony ground.

“Crack...” A crack appeared in the ground.

Although Brodie's rage rose to the heavens, he was still cautious. He had set up a Godrealm long ago, making it so that the area within ten meters of him was separated from the outside realm. Even if he shattered rocks and howled here, the outside world wouldn't hear a thing.

“That Allott was a Highgod. How will I take revenge? How will I be able to rescue Vidonica [Wei'duo'ni'ka]?” Brodie's mind was in a state of chaos. In the past, he and his wife Vidonica had been curious about the Infernal Realm, and had entered it, filled with eagerness towards what the future held!

In his material realm, Brodie was without question a supreme expert, because he was a God! In addition, he had two God-level divine clones, and a Saint-level original body!

A God, in a material realm, could be said to be invincible. But once he led his Demigod wife into the Infernal Realm, they were casually tossed aside by the Muja Army's soldiers and thus landed in the Lotte tribe. Brodie dreamed of struggling hard and training while earning some money, so as to go to the cities. After all, life in the tribes was filled with constant danger.

Everything had progressed as he had planned...

But who would have imagined that the leader of the Lotte tribe, Allott, had actually taken a fancy to Brodie's wife, Vidonica, upon seeing her! Without saying anything, he had seized her!

The two, husband and wife, had been together for countless years, and they had arrived together from a material plane. In Brodie's heart, his wife was more important to him than life itself! Although he had heard that some powerful people would forcibly take away some weak women, Brodie had never imagined this would happen to him.

Actually, after one became a Deity, appearances no longer mattered.

Deities could change their appearances. But the nobility and aura that came from the soul was different for each person. Some female Deities looked ordinary on the outside, but had a particular charisma or aura

which would attract some experts. If these experts were reasonable, they might slowly woo them. But if the women were to encounter tyrannical, domineering experts, they would simply be taken away.

That year, when Linley, Delia, and Bebe had arrived in the Infernal Realm, others had warned Linley to be careful.

Only...Linley hadn't been as unlucky as Brodie.

"What should I do?" Whenever Brodie thought about his wife had been taken away, he felt so agonized he could go mad.

He had once thought up a way to bring his wife back and rescue her. But his plans...in the face of the tribal leader's power and forces, they were nothing more than a joke. Afterwards, Brodie had risked his life before escaping. And that was only the tribal leader, Allott, hadn't cared about him, a God.

"There is no moonlight today. Everything outside is dark. It is time to head out." Brodie's plan was very simple.

He would hurry to a city, then use the meager resources he had accumulated over the years to go take the Fiend trials. Upon becoming a Fiend, he, Brodie, would roam the Infernal Realm and train himself at the edge between life and death!

"There will come the day when I become a true expert and once more return to the Lotte tribe." Brodie said silently to himself, and then he suddenly moved, exiting the cave like a black shadow and entering the black night, beginning to advance at high speed.

Training at the precipice between life and death, until the point at which he could defeat Allott?

Brodie himself knew that the chances of success were nearly zero! Allott was the leader of a tribe, after all. In terms of strength, he was most likely at the Five Star Fiend or Six Star Fiend level. Brodie was a God. To want to one day be able to defeat Allott? The chances were too low.

Brodie executed the Shadowshape technique, cleaving close to the ground as he constantly advanced. He didn't dare to make any noise at all, for fear of attracting attention from bandits. He was a God. In a material realm, he was an expert, but in the Infernal Realm...he was like a paper boat that would be overturned and annihilated by the smallest of waves.

Suddenly...

A red light seemed to flash past.

"Eh?" Brodie had been advancing at high speed, but he suddenly halted and frowned as he turned back to look.

"What was that?" Brodie felt his heart clench, and he couldn't help but draw closer to that faint red light which had just flashed past.

There, hidden within the dry grass, a caltrop shaped red diamond was lying on the ground.

Upon seeing this red caltrop diamond, Brodie felt as though his soul had been mesmerized by it. He couldn't help but reach out to grab it. Once the red caltrop diamond entered his hand, instantly...a unique energy instantly swept through Brodie's entire body and soul!

"What a comfortable feeling! It seems as though this power can protect the soul." No matter how foolish Brodie might be, he instantly understood that he had acquired a treasure just now.

“What sort of a treasure is this?” Brodie felt quite mystified.

He had just arrived in the Infernal Realm long ago, and had only stayed in this tribe. He hadn’t even gone into any cities. How could a God like him know about the news regarding the Overgod talismans? And how could he know what the item in his hands was! The only people who knew this information were either Asura level experts or information brokers like the Blacksand Castle merchants.

“My soul seems to have become powerful.” Brodie couldn’t help but feel shocked.

Just as Brodie was feeling stunned by the red caltrop diamond, a figure suddenly flashed past through the skies, then came to a sudden halt. This was a muscular man whose face was covered with green scales. “My lucky isn’t bad. I found some prey while on patrol!”

Bandit groups had patrols as well. Most of the patrolling guards had divine clones back at the headquarters; upon finding any prey, their clones would immediately send news back to the headquarters.

“Kid, you grabbed that red diamond. Whatever for?” A snicker rang out from above.

The red diamond was quite clearly visible in the dark night.

However, Brodie was too stunned by the special effect of this red caltrop diamond. After all, he hadn’t lived for too long in the Infernal Realm by himself; he simply wasn’t cautious enough. He hadn’t imagined that a wandering patrol would just so happen to arrive at this moment.

“You...” Brodie lifted his head, and his face changed.

In the darkness, Deities would still be able to see to a certain distance.

“Flee!” Brodie didn’t hesitate at all, transforming into a blur as he fled at high speed.

“Too late.” The patrolling warrior above snickered. He was in no hurry to go kill Brodie alone; instead, he awaited his comrades. The other members of this lair of bandits, under the guidance of the muscular man’s clone, was swarming on this position.

“Haha, kid, you came to our mountain. You think you can just leave whenever you want?” Loud laughter rang out.

Brodie raised his head to look.

“You won’t be able to leave.”

Brodie turned his head to look.

In the blink of an eye, more than ten bandits had surrounded him. Brodie’s face turned ashen.

“Why. Why did it end up this way?” Brodie was in such pain that he wanted to howl in agony. He had just escaped the tribe, and his scheme of revenge had yet to even begin. And now, he had encountered bandits.

“I...I’m willing to join you.” Brodie said hurriedly.

“You are just a God. One more or one extra makes no difference.” The leader laughed coldly. These dozens of bandits were led by a man in a violet robe, who was a Highgod. This bandit group numbered nearly a thousand in total and had three Highgods. They might be interested in a Highgod, but generally speaking, they couldn’t be bothered about recruiting Gods.

Although they had quite a few people, for just a single one of the three leaders to lead some people over was enough to kill Brodie.

“No, I...” Brodie wanted to say something.

“Brothers, kill him.” The violet-robed figure gave the order calmly.

“Haha...”

“Accept death.”

The bandits were completely confident. Each of them launched their soul attacks or material attacks against Brodie.

“No. No...” Brodie bellowed in rage.

His revenge was incomplete. He had yet to rescue his wife. He wasn’t willing to just die here!

In the Infernal Realm...the number of people like him, who were unwilling to die, who had revenge left unfinished...were beyond number!

“Bang!” “Boom!”

Tens of bandit attacks descended. Brodie frantically dodged, but he was still struck by five material attacks and three soul attacks, which struck his body.

“He’s dead for sure.” The violet-robed man and the other experts all believed this. A Highgod would be able to endure it, but this was a God.

“I?”

Brodie had a look of astonishment on his face. He had been shattered, but in that same instant his body had been shattered, it had quickly reformed at a speed that exceeded the shattering speed. As for the soul attacks...those three attacks only made his soul tremble slightly. The red caltrop diamond contained a unique energy which effortlessly deflected those soul attacks.

This red caltrop diamond was located at the ‘core’ of the Crown of Life.

In terms of power, it was more powerful than the nine soul pearls. As for the pentametal crown, it was the least useful of them all.

When Linley had attacked Molde, those nine soul pearls had allowed Molde to stay alive. How could ordinary bandits kill Brodie?

“Eh?” The bandits were all stupefied.

Brodie lowered his head, looking at the red caltrop diamond in his hands. When he had encountered this earlier crisis, he had thought that the red caltrop diamond had a particular power which was capable of protecting his soul, which was why he was gripping it. But the effects of the red caltrop diamond vastly exceeded his imagination. “I didn’t expect that this treasure would be, would be so powerful.” Brodie’s eyes instantly lit up.

In fact, Brodie now felt as though the entire world was filled with light and color.

“With this, I’ll be able to get revenge. I definitely will!” Brodie was wildly overjoyed.

“What’s going on?” The violet-robed man frowned. “All together, kill him.”

“Yes.”

The bandits, hearing the command of their third leader, immediately charged down and attacked Brodie.

“Die.” Brodie held the red caltrop diamond in one hand and a short dagger in the other, wanting to kill the bandit ahead of him, so as to flee.

“You won’t be able to flee.” The bandits were completely confident as they launched their most powerful attacks.

Brodie completely ignored the enemy attacks, and his dagger split a bandit’s head in two.

“This kid’s defense is so tough.” The violet-robed man, watching this, frowned, then with a flicker, also joined the fray.

Brodie’s speed was far inferior to this violet-robed man’s.

“Scram!” Brodie forced back yet another bandit. He wanted to break out of and escape from this encirclement, but what he didn’t realize was that a stream of violet light had already appeared in front of him. “God. Too weak.” The violet-robed man murmured to himself. At the same time, his violet glove covered right hand gently smashed down on Brodie’s head.

“Smash!”

In the instant he was struck, Brodie finally created.

“Crackle...” The violet-robed man’s body actually began to tremble.

“Aaaaaaah!!!” The violet-robed man began to howl in agony. In but an instant, the violet-robed man collapsed, completely lifeless.

A Highgod...had died!

“This...what happened to the commander?” The bandits were completely stupefied.

“This diamond...” Brodie felt wild joy in his heart. He himself knew very well what had happened. When the enemy had struck him on his head, the red caltrop diamond had instantly generated a bizarre, freezing pulse of energy that had wildly devoured the enemy’s spiritual energy, instantly draining the enemy’s soul dry and shattering it.

“This diamond harms enemies but not me.” Brodie tested using his spiritual energy to activate the red caltrop diamond, but as he thought, the surge of cold energy once more spread out.

In addition, under Brodie’s guidance, it actually covered his black dagger.

“Haha...” Brodie seemed to have gone insane as he charged against the bandits. All the bandits who were so much as nicked by the dagger or who were touched by Brodie’s body all collapsed, quivered, then died!

In but an instant, aside from five bandits who were so terrified that they immediately turned tail and fled, all of the bandits perished!

“With this diamond...why should I fear Allott?” Brodie was extremely agitated. He glanced at the distant mountain, then moved as fast as lightning, departing at high speed.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 24,

Status

Ever since that trip to the Blacksand Castle, where Linley saw the fake 'red caltrop diamond' and 'pentametal crown', he had an additional goal in his mind. While adventuring through the Infernal Realm, every few years, Linley would make a trip to the Fiend Castle while in a city and investigate the intelligence reports regarding the Overgod talismans.

Each investigation cost him ten million inkstones.

This price seemed to be high, but generally speaking, only true experts would be interested in this sort of report, as well as a few powerful Highgod merchants. Ten million inkstones, to such powerful experts and such wealthy merchants, wasn't a very high price.

Jadefloat Continent. Coldcalm Prefecture. Goodhope City.

Linley's group was wandering the streets of Goodhope city. Linley laughed as he glanced at Bebe. "Bebe, Goodhope City is Nisse's old home. Supposedly, her elder brother, Salomon, resides here within Goodhope City, and is in charge of managing the entire city's administrative matters. Now that Nisse has taken Yina to go see Salomon, why don't you go as well?"

"Hmph. Salomon? I can't be bothered to go visit him." Bebe said disdainfully.

"Are you still holding a grudge over what happened that year at the volcano range?" Delia laughed with a wry twist to her lips.

Salomon's behavior back then did, indeed, cause Linley, Delia, and Bebe to cease considering Salomon a friend. Not long after Bebe and Nisse had wed, however, Bebe had accompanied her to meet Salomon.

"Last time I went to see Salomon, it was because I was worried that Nisse would feel unhappy. Unless it is necessary, I can't be bothered to go see him. I look down on his sort of person." Bebe said.

"That Salomon is indeed unworthy of befriending." Yale spoke as well. Yale and Reynolds both knew of some things that had happened in the past.

"Let's go. The Fiend Castle is up ahead." Reynolds chuckled.

Everyone knew that upon entering a city, Linley would generally insist on going to the Fiend Castle.

The Fiend Castle was fairly empty, and even in the main hall on the first floor, there were few people present. Linley, in quite a familiar manner, headed straight to the stairway towards the third floor.

"Help me make an investigation into any news regarding the Overgod talismans." Linley walked to a nearby counter on the third floor, then handed over his Fiend emblem. In the Fiend Castle, whether one wished to accept a mission or to engage in an investigation, one had to first be a Fiend. An ordinary person, even a rich one, wouldn't be qualified.

"News regarding the Overgod talismans?" The skinny elder with short black hair who stood behind the counter raised his head, glancing sideways at Linley, then snickered, "One Star Fiend. 'Linley'. You are a merchant?"

The short-haired elder had investigated and realized that Linley was a 'One Star Fiend'. Naturally, he came to this conclusion.

"No need to concern yourself." Linley laughed calmly.

"Kid, making a fake Overgod talisman to swindle others won't be that easy." The short-haired elder snickered, then pulled out a scroll. "This is the most up-to-date collection of information on the Overgod talismans in the entire Infernal Realm. The price to read it once is ten million inkstones."

Linley casually tossed out ten fist-sized azurites.

These large azurites were equivalent to a million inkstones.

"When reading through this scroll, if you desire a scryer recording which pertains to something in the scroll, just tell me." The short-haired elder was quite lazy; he didn't even bring out the scryer recordings.

Linley didn't mind, instead flipping through the scroll.

The scroll was divided into sections pertaining to the 'pentametal crown', the 'nine soul pearls', the 'red caltrop diamond', and the 'Overgod decree'. They were arranged by date. Linley flipped directly to the section on the 'red caltrop diamond' and began to read, starting from the latter sections. After all, he had read much of the earlier parts previously.

"While holding the red caltrop diamond, this person's wounds instantly healed? And there's a scryer recording?"

"When holding the red caltrop diamond, this person was able to sense the Edicts of Fate and was able to immediately become a Highgod? There's a scryer recording proving this as well?"

Linley, seeing these reports, couldn't help but shake his head and laugh.

There were many fake stories.

For example, while holding a fake red caltrop diamond, one might swallow a pill concocted by an expert of the Edicts of Life, then allow others to attack one's self. At the same time one was being injured, the effects of the pill would activate, and one's wounds would naturally heal. From the scryer recording, however, it would appear as though it was being done by the fake red caltrop diamond.

"This one is interesting. While holding the red caltrop diamond, one would have an indestructible body. Only, there is no scryer recording."

Linley glanced at the last one, then laughed. "This report is really ridiculous. While holding the red caltrop diamond, not only does one have an indestructible body, but anyone who touches him will die?" As Linley saw it, the Crown of Life should be a healing, curative item. After all, that was the type of energy held within the pentametal crown as well.

The nine soul pearls were also designed to save others. Linley thus came to the subconscious conclusion that the same was true for the red caltrop diamond.

But he had forgotten...

Experts of the Edicts of Life were able to save others, but also able to harm others. Since the Crown of Life was able to save others, of course it was able to harm others as well.

"Oh, and this doesn't even have a scryer recording. This comes from the Muja Continent? A God who wielded this red caltrop diamond was able to kill a group of Gods and a Highgod? There isn't even a scryer

recording. Anyone can make this sort of story up, and there is no way to verify it. Not credible.” Linley’s gaze swept past it, then he continued to read the reports below.

Only if Linley felt a report to be credible would he bother to see the scryer recordings.

“Hey, are you done yet?” The short-haired elder said with a frown.

“Why are you rushing us?” Yale, not too far away from Linley, couldn’t help but snap back as he stared at the short-haired elder.

“I’m just asking you all to hurry up.” The short-haired elder glanced sideways at Yale. “Also, this is the Fiend Castle. Don’t make a fuss here.” The short-haired elder was a Highgod as well. Given that it was forbidden to fight within the castle, generally speaking, this elder didn’t treat customers with a great deal of courtesy.

Given that Linley was a One Star Fiend, he would be all the more looked down upon.

“Don’t be in a rush. Wait a while.” Linley glanced calmly at the short-haired elder, then continued to leaf through the intelligence reports.

Right at this moment, footsteps rang from upstairs, making their way down below.

“Oh, quite a few people have come to buy intelligence reports today.” A gentle voice rang out from far away. Linley turned his head to glance at the speaker, and in total there were three figures walking over. The leader was a gold-haired, blue-eyed middle-aged man, who had two green-robed women following behind him.

The short-haired elder behind the counter, upon seeing this person, was badly startled and hurriedly bowed. “Governor!”

“Sit.” The gold-haired, blue-eyed man laughed calmly. “Right. Give me a report and scryer recordings regarding the various challenges to the Lord Prefects the Infernal Realm has recently seen.” In the Infernal Realm, for Seven Star Fiends to challenge Lord Prefects was a commonplace event.

“Yes, Governor.” The short-haired elder was very meek.

The gold-haired, blue-eyed man glanced at Bebe, then frowned, somewhat puzzled. Then he walked to the counter and accepted the scroll that the short-haired elder handed him, along with the many scryer recording crystal balls that were now on the counter.

At this moment, Linley and the governor were reading shoulder-to-shoulder.

The gold-haired, blue-eyed man glanced at the nearby Linley out of the corner of his eyes. His face suddenly changed, and he cried out in surprise, “Are you Lord Linley?”

“Hrm?” Linley turned to glance at him. “Who are you?” Linley didn’t recognize this person at all.

“Governor...” The short-haired, skinny elder, upon seeing the governor act so respectfully towards Linley, couldn’t help but say hurriedly, “His name is Linley, but he is only a One Star Fiend.”

“Shut your mouth.” The gold-haired middle-aged man gave an icy glance to the short-haired elder.

“One Star Fiend?” A look of surprise flashed through the gold-haired man’s eyes, then he looked at the Fiend emblem in the short-haired elder’s hands. “Seiya [Sha’ya], hurry up and go exchange that Fiend emblem for a Seven Star Fiend emblem!”

The short-haired elder was shocked.

A One Star Fiend...had just become a Seven Star Fiend?

Based on the rules of the Fiend Castle, one could only be promoted through taking on missions. How could it be changed by a whim?

“Governor...” The green-robed woman behind him, ‘Seiya’, couldn’t help but feel puzzled. The governor of a city’s Fiend Castle was exceedingly strong, true, and an individual at the Seven Star Fiend Level. But that didn’t mean he was qualified to directly hand out Seven Star Fiend emblems.

“Don’t worry. If even the Paragon-level expert, ‘Lord Linley’, isn’t qualified to be a Seven Star Fiend, who in the Infernal Realm would be?” The gold-haired man laughed.

“Oh, you recognize me?” Linley gave him a surprised glance.

The gold-haired man smiled. “Information regarding supreme experts such as Paragons are under the personal control of the governors of the Fiend Castles. I even have detailed information regarding the events of the Planar Wars, and I even have scryer recordings of the several battles you engaged in, Lord Linley, before you became a Paragon. More importantly, I myself participated in that Planar War, and I saw you, Lord Linley.”

Linley was startled.

“But of course, a Seven Star Fiend like myself was nothing more than a captain in the armies. Lord Linley, when you and Lord Magnus were engaging in that great battle, we were all watching. It is only normal for me to recognize you but for you not to recognize me, Lord Linley.” The governor laughed.

In the Planar Battlefield, he was nothing more than a simple soldier.

“Just now, when I first saw Lord Bebe, I was startled and felt he looked familiar, but I didn’t react in time. I didn’t even dare imagine that you, Lord Linley, would be here. But upon seeing you in person, Lord Linley, I came to my senses.” The governor laughed while speaking.

Linley couldn’t help but chuckle as well.

Intelligence reports were divided into levels. Although Overgod missions sounded important, and should be ranked as top-grade intelligence reports, in reality, there were simply too many fake reports, and so they would naturally be ranked lowly and be managed by ordinary Highgods.

Information regarding Paragons or Sovereigns, or regarding some ancient secrets, however, weren’t purchasable with money alone.

“Pa, Paragon?” The short-haired elder stared nervously at Linley.

A One Star Fiend? Was actually one of the legendary, invincible Paragons?

Linley and the governor chatted for a while, then Linley took his Fiend emblem and left. By now, however, he had a new Seven Star Fiend emblem.

“What a pity. There is too much fake information. A few sounded plausible, but they didn’t even have scryer recordings.” Linley left regretfully.

After Brodie had acquired the red caltrop diamond, given how completely destitute he was, he naturally had taken the interspatial rings of the bandits and their divine sparks as he left. After countless trials, Brodie discovered that as his spiritual energy grew more powerful, the amount of that unique energy he could summon from the red caltrop diamond increased as well.

Thus, Brodie decided to fuse with a divine spark.

He had two divine clones. In order to gain revenge, he was willing to allow one of them to fuse with a divine spark! Rising from God to Highgod, even through fusing with divine sparks, meant that the soul would skyrocket in power.

The Muja Continent. An ordinary tribe. The Lotte tribe!

“Allott, come out!” This bellow echoed throughout the air above the Lotte tribe.

The warriors of the Lotte tribe stared in surprise and terror at the fiendish, godlike figure who stood there in the air. That formerly weak ‘Brodie’ had become so powerful and terrifying upon his return! The corpses currently littering the ground were the results of the earlier battle against him! No one was able to touch Brodie and survive!

“Brodie, you became a Highgod so quickly? I imagine you fused with a divine spark. You didn’t run far away, but instead dared to return? You really are looking for death.”

A figure suddenly floated up into the air above the castle. Dressed completely in black armor, this man’s entire body, including face, was covered. Only a pair of golden yellow eyes could be seen. This was the number one expert of the Lotte tribe, the leader of the tribe...Allott!

“Barriman [Ba’li’man], let’s continue our discussions on cooperating later. I’ll go deal with this punk first.” Allott lowered his head and smiled towards an old man with curly brown hair.

“Chief Allott, feel free to go take care of your internal matters. I’m in no rush.” Old man Barriman laughed calmly.

Allott was very confident, because he was a Six Star Fiend level expert. As he saw it, although Brodie was able to kill many warriors, the reason was primarily because he was a Highgod, and also because...he had probably come up with some sort of unusual attack. But Allott didn’t care about that, because as he saw it, the difference in power between them was too great. There were no tricks Brodie could use.

In battle, one had to rely on true ability. If he, a Six Star Fiend, was unable to kill a Highgod who had just fused with a divine spark, that would be quite bizarre.

“My wife?” Brodie growled.

“Your wife?” Allott laughed. “Your wife is pretty obstinate. She’d rather die than submit. Still, I’m in no rush...I’ll slowly train her. And now...I’ll kill you first.” Allott waved his hand, and a two meter long blood-red giant sickle appeared.

The Six Star Fiend, Allott. The Highgod who had become one through usage of a divine spark, Brodie. They stared at each other in midair.

“I should be able to see Allott’s power in this battle.” The old man with the curly brown hair looked at the two men above the castle, smiling while using the ‘screyer technique’ to record this battle.

Actually, not just him; many of the tribal experts who trained in the Laws of Water were all recording this battle.

“Feel honored to die beneath my supreme technique.” Allott let out a calm laugh, and then his body flashed out in a red arc as that giant red sickle slashed down...

“Slash...”

A giant spatial rift appeared. For a Six Star Fiend to be able to tear a hole in space represented that the strength of his attack power was fairly high amongst Six Star Fiends.

“Hmph.” Brodie just used his black dagger to block it.

“Clang!”

The black dagger was actually shattered.

“Too weak.” Allott laughed disdainfully as the red sickle in his hands chopped towards Brodie’s skull.

“Crackle...”

As the red sickle chopped into Brodie’s skull, Allott suddenly felt his blow become powerless, because the damaged head was actually healing at a rate so rapid that the red sickle wasn’t able to chop any further.

“What, what is going on?” Allott was shocked.

“Die.” Brodie discarded the dagger in his hand, then stretched his hand out, snatching at Allott’s sickle-wielding right hand.

As their hands touched...

“Eh?” Allott felt a terrifying powerful energy ravenously devour at his soul. The devouring power was simply too strong.

“Im...impossible?” Allott frantically tried to resist. “Die.” Allott wildly chopped at Brodie with his sickle, but each blade was only able to leave a scar on Brodie’s body and go no further in. In the blink of an eye, though, even the scar would disappear. It could be said that Brodie...

Had an indestructible body!

“Impossible? Completely impossible?” Allott had never heard of something like this before.

“You are actually able to endure.” Brodie’s face changed. “This is because my soul is too weak, so the amount of energy I am able to control is too low...”

“Rumble...” The red caltrop diamond emitted a trembling sound, and a bizarre, icy cold green light surged forth, filling Allott’s body. As this surge of icy energy joined as well, Allott was no longer able to resist, and his soul was instantly devoured.

The many tribal warriors below were all stunned.

They just saw a green light flash, and then, Allott died!

“That...that is?”

The face of the curly brown-haired elder, ‘Barriman’ changed. He was an expert on par with Allott, and his divine sense discovered...that the green light was emanating from a red caltrop diamond. “A red caltrop diamond? Can it be...?” Barriman suddenly thought of something he had once heard of. He couldn’t help but feel shocked.

“Swoosh.” Barriman didn’t stay in the tribe any further, immediately, stealthily fleeing.

“Vidonica!” Brodie grew agitated as he excitedly flew towards the castle.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 25, A Sudden Shockwave

The hazy light of the Blood Sun seemed to cover the entire Lotte tribe with a layer of bloody gauze.

The entire Lotte tribe was deathly silent!

The battle with Brodie had caused nearly ten percent of the God-level warriors of the tribe to perish. Although this didn't sound like a large number, ten percent represented the lives of hundreds of Gods. Fortunately, this was the Infernal Realm, and everyone was accustomed to slaughter and death. Thus, the Lotte tribe quickly returned to normal, and the former 'number two expert' of the tribe, the escort captain 'Bolan' [Bo'lin], became the new chief.

"I don't understand. How could that kid Brodie have become so powerful? Last time, when he fled the tribe, he was just a God. Even I could've killed him with ease! His strength was quite average. But after ten short years...just ten short years! Inconceivable. How could he have grown so powerful? Just before starting the battle, the chief himself said that Brodie was nothing more than a divine spark Highgod. But the chief, a Six Star Fiend, died to him!

All sorts of discussions were currently going on within the Lotte tribe.

"Some of those dead brothers of ours have some surviving divine clones. They all said that Brodie's body contained an unusual energy that was able to devour souls!"

"I saw it as well. It was a ray of green light which killed the chief! I used the scryer technique to record it down."

"Hey...let me tell you something. I was fairly close to Brodie, and I was able to find through divine sense the source of that green light. It was a caltrop-shaped red diamond he was holding in his hand. As I see it, the reason Brodie became so strong has to have something to do with that unusual diamond which emanated that green light!"

Brodie had already taken his wife and flown away long ago. This was the reason why these tribesmen now dared to discuss these things.

"I heard that curly brown-haired elder was named 'Barriman', and that he wanted to buy the scryer recordings of Brodie massacring the tribesmen earlier?" A tall, skinny, white-haired youth asked.

"Right. Just yesterday, Lord Barriman returned once more to buy the previous scryer recordings. He was willing to pay a million inkstones for each recording. He really does live up to his reputation as a true expert who even Chief Allott received with sincerity. He really is generous in his actions. Right, tell me, why do you think Lord Barriman purchased the scryer recordings from us?"

"Hmph." The tall, skinny, white-haired youth let out a chuckle. "Doesn't that go without saying? He definitely wants to accumulate enough scryer recordings, the more detailed the better, and then auction them off to the Fiend Castles! Brodie, a Highgod who fused with a divine spark, while holding that unusual diamond, was able to kill a Six Star Fiend. I've never heard of such a terrifying treasure. That diamond definitely is an incredible treasure. For Brodie to have such power when wielding it...if it was a Seven Star Fiend or a Lord Prefect who had the treasure, how mighty would it be? As I see it, Lord Barriman wants to rely on this information to earn a huge fortune."

Few idiots were able to become Deities. The guesses of the tribesmen were correct; the Six Star Fiend, 'Barriman', could be considered an expert in the Infernal Realm. He knew about the Overgod missions, and he understood...that this red diamond might be the legendary Overgod talisman, the 'red caltrop diamond'!

An Overgod talisman! What sort of treasure was this!

But Barriman also knew that whether the Overgod mission was real or false was hard to say. Thus, Barriman collected as much detailed information as he could, totaling tens of sryer recordings, then offered them at a sky-high price to the Fiend Castle! In addition, he actually dared to guarantee that the red caltrop diamond which he, Barriman, had located, was as valuable as a Sovereign artifact, even if it wasn't an Overgod talisman.

The price...

Was one trillion inkstones!

This price, to the Fiend Castles, wasn't worth mentioning. But a fairly wealthy Seven Star Fiend's entire net worth might be only around a trillion inkstones or so. And what's more, it was uncertain as to whether or not the 'Overgod mission' was even real. If he set a price which was too high, the Fiend Castle could simply send its own people to investigate independently.

The deal was made!

The Fiend Castle spent a trillion inkstones and purchased this intelligence report.

The Fiend Castle's staff members verified the report, and then were convinced that the red caltrop diamond which emanated that green light was definitely a unique treasure. All of the Fiend Castles of the Infernal Realm thus received a copy of this report.

The Redbud Continent. The third floor of a city's Fiend Castle.

"What sort of intelligence report do you need?"

The staff member behind the counter said calmly.

"Information regarding the Overgod mission. Ten million inkstones, right?" A silver-haired, cyclopean youth said coldly while handing over ten million inkstones and his Fiend emblem.

The intelligence agent behind the counter verified the Fiend emblem. His attitude instantly became more respectful, and he immediately brought out a scroll and sryer recordings.

After viewing the sryer recordings and the scroll, the silver-haired cyclopean youth turned and prepared to leave. But the staff member suddenly said, "Mr. Sigu, our Fiend Castle just received some information regarding the Overgod talisman, the 'red caltrop diamond'. This information is absolutely real. The diamond mentioned by the report, even if not an Overgod talisman, is definitely a spiritual treasure comparable to a Sovereign artifact."

"Oh?" The silver-haired cyclopean youth turned his head suddenly. "Either an Overgod talisman or a treasure comparable to a Sovereign artifact?"

"Right." The staff member nodded with complete confidence. "This is absolutely true."

"What is the price of this report?" The silver-haired cyclopean youth said coldly.

"To someone like you, Lord Sigu, the price isn't that high. Only ninety billion inkstones!" The staff member said with a smile.

This price....caused the silver-haired cyclopean youth to frown as well.

The Fiend Castle was quite clever in setting prices. Ninety billion inkstones meant that the price was within the tens of billions. If they set the price at a hundred billion, that would be on a different level and give people a different type of feeling. The report that they had purchased for a trillion inkstones would thus only have to be sold at ninety billion inkstones for eleven or twice times in order for them to recoup their investment.

“Fine.” The silver-haired cyclopean youth waved his hand and removed an interspatial ring, then tossed it over. “There are ninety billion inkstones within this.”

“Lord Sigu, please wait a moment. This sort of important report is being carried by the governor himself, who carries it with him. I will ask him to provide it. Please wait.” The staff member was very courteous. Sigu was a Seven Star Fiend.

Generally speaking, the intelligence agents would only recommend this sort of information to someone who reached the Six Star Fiend or Seven Star Fiend level. Those who were too weak didn’t have the money to buy information of this level.

Moments later, the silver-haired cyclopean youth received the intelligence report.

He flipped through the contents of it while also viewing the dozens of scryer recordings.

“Something which allows a Highgod who fused with divine sparks to defeat a Six Star Fiend?” The silver-haired cyclopean youth was shocked. He didn’t hesitate at all, immediately flying out of the Fiend Castle at high speed.

As a Seven Star Fiend, the silver-haired cyclopean youth instantly raised his speed to the highest limit as he flew towards the Muja Continent!

The Fiend Castles were spread throughout the Infernal Realm. The Infernal Realm had many experts, and quite a few of them were able to purchase this sort of information. Many of them, upon seeing the detailed contents of this report, began to converge towards the Muja Continent. Unfortunately...the Infernal Realm was simply too vast!

It would take too long for people from other continents to hurry to the Muja Continent.

But fortunately, the experts also travelled quite quickly.

Jadefloat Continent. Gracesal City.

Linley’s group was leisurely wandering about the city. Afterwards, they habitually arrived at the third floor of the local Fiend Castle, and Linley once more purchased information regarding the Overgod talisman.

Linley flipped through the intelligence report, then turned to leave.

“Lord Linley, I have another set of valuable information regarding the red caltrop diamond in specific.” The intelligence agent said hurriedly. After having inspected Linley’s Fiend emblem, he already knew that Linley was a Seven Star Fiend.

“Oh, valuable information? Regarding the red caltrop diamond? Why did you separate it from the other related reports?” Linley laughed as he looked at the intelligence agent.

“Boss, the Fiend Castle really knows how to make money.” Bebe sighed.

“All businessmen are evil, you know.” Yale chortled merrily. Yale had been the manager of the Dawson Conglomerate; he knew quite a bit about business.

The intelligence agent laughed awkwardly, “Lord Linley, ordinary people aren’t qualified to view this intelligence report, and the price we paid to acquire it was astronomical as well. We can’t operate at a loss, you know. Our Fiend Castle has already verified the information in this report, and we are able to vouch...that this red caltrop diamond, even if it isn’t an Overgod talisman, is something comparable to a Sovereign artifact.”

“Oh?” Linley’s eyes lit up.

“Lord Linley, are you willing to buy it? The price isn’t high, just ninety billion inkstones.” The intelligence agent said hurriedly.

Ninety billion inkstones, to the current Linley, truly was nothing.

It must be understood that even an ancient clan like Salomon and Nisse’s had hundreds of trillions of inkstones. And the price of a single drop of Sovereign’s Might far surpassed a hundred trillion inkstones.

In addition, although the Four Divine Beasts clan which had previously spread its power throughout the greater planes had retreated from those planes, the wealth that they had acquired over the years hadn’t declined. Their wealth was truly astronomical. As the number one expert of the current Four Divine Beasts clan, Linley naturally wasn’t treated stingily by the Four Divine Beasts clan. They gave him with an interspatial ring filled with wealth. As to how much it held, Linley didn’t even try to calculate it.

To the current Linley, wealth didn’t mean anything any longer.

“Alright. I will buy this intelligence report.” Linley nodded.

“Lord Linley, please wait momentarily. I will immediately go make the request of the Lord Governor.” The intelligence agent was overjoyed, and he hurriedly left while speaking.

Linley’s group waited momentarily, and as they did, Bebe mentally spoke to Linley. “Boss, the price the Fiend Castle requested is so high, and they hid the report in such a secretive manner. Do you think that the red caltrop diamond they found might really be the Overgod talisman?” Bebe also knew that Linley was in possession of two of them.

“Possibly.” Linley nodded.

Although on the surface, he looked calm, in his heart, Linley was unable to repress his excitement and anticipation!

“I already have two of them and only lack a single one. Once the three come together, I can offer them to the Overgod of Life and make a request.” Linley knew that he could request an Overgod artifact, and that his request would definitely be granted. But Linley didn’t want it. He just wanted Grandpa Doebling to once more appear before him!

Footsteps rang out once more.

Several figures suddenly walked out, with the leader, a handsome, black-robed youth, hurriedly striding forward and bowing upon seeing Linley. “Greetings, Mr. Linley!”

“Governor...” His subordinates, including the intelligence agent, were all stunned.

The power level of the governors of the Fiend Castles were not all the same, but generally speaking, they were at least at the Six Star Fiend or Seven Star Fiend level.

“I heard that you wanted to take a look at this report, Mr. Linley. Lord Linley, please feel free. As for the fee? No need to mention it.” The black-robed youth behaved very modestly. Those ordinary staff members of the Fiend Castle, upon inspecting the Fiend emblem, would only take Linley to be a Seven Star Fiend. The governors of the Fiend Castles, however, all knew of Linley’s famous name.

Which of them would dare charge a Paragon-level expert ninety billion inkstones?

“Thank you, then.” Linley laughed calmly as he accepted the intelligence report. He understood that since they insisted on letting him view it for free, if he insisted on paying for it, it would actually make them feel awkward.

“These are scryer recordings pertaining to this intelligence report.” The governor, seeing that they hadn’t been laid out yet, couldn’t help but feel quite excited as he personally placed down one crystal ball after another.

Linley carefully read through the intelligence report, then viewed the scryer recordings.

After gaining a deeper level of understanding...Linley’s heart began to tremble!

“Nine out of ten says this is real! In addition, the size is completely identical.” Linley was incomparably excited, because the information he just saw from Barriman and the Lotte tribe had come from quite a few people using their divine senses to inspect the red caltrop diamond. These people knew how large the diamond was, and so naturally they had described it. “The size perfectly fits that caltrop-shaped indentation. And the power of it...”

When Linley thought about how he was going to acquire the third talisman and complete his task, he felt incomparably excited.

“Not good.” Linley’s heart trembled. “If I manage to acquire all three Overgod artifacts and the Overgod shows himself, the Sovereigns will definitely know the truth. Perhaps, in their rage, they might come to deal with me!” Linley began to worry.

“Bebe.” Linley sent mentally.

“Yes, Boss?” Bebe was startled.

“Hurry up and lead everyone out from the Jadedfloat Continent’s teleportation array. Return to the Yulan continent for now. Afterwards, ask Lord Beirut to help out and arrange for those family and friends of ours who are living in the Skyrise Mountains to immediately return to the Yulan continent.” Linley instructed solemnly.

“Boss, what are you...?” Bebe was shocked.

“I’m just preparing against all possibilities. Given the status Sovereigns have, they probably wouldn’t be so shameless as to vent their anger against my family and friends, but I’m not willing to take that risk. Thus, it’s best to plan things out early.” Linley made his decision quite firmly. “After rescuing Grandpa Doehring, I will immediately return to the Yulan continent! At worst, in the future, I’ll just remain in the Yulan plane and never go to any of the Higher Planes or Divine Planes again.”

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“Sovereigns, vent their anger?” Bebe, hearing Linley’s words, understood how grave this was.

“Boss, you are a Soul Mutate. There is no need for you to bring all of your divine clones to this battle.” Bebe sent mentally.

Linley, hearing this, immediately felt these words made sense. “That’s true. I’ll just bring my original body and divine wind clone. As for the other three divine clones, they will return to the Yulan Plane.” After becoming a Soul Mutate, each of Linley’s clones were roughly on par with each other. Aside from his original body, which had a stronger Will, his water, earth, and wind souls were on par, with his fire clone being weaker.

In addition, since he was a Soul Mutate, his divine wind clone could also, for example, use earth-type divine power to attack.

Linley only needed to bring his original body and one divine clone, and he would thus still be able to unleash his maximum power.

“Bebe, give me that godspark weapon you forged.” Linley sent mentally.

It must be understood that the other two talismans were hidden within that godspark weapon.

“Boss, it is best if I stay with you here.” Bebe sent. “If you were to take this godspark longstaff and leave, others would find it suspicious. After all, Boss, you aren’t skilled in using staff-type weapons. But if I hold the weapon, others won’t be suspicious.”

Linley hesitated momentarily, then agreed.

Prior to this, the plan was to have Bebe lead everyone away, but now his divine clones would naturally play that role. Whether or not Bebe led everyone away no longer matter.

“Fine, that’s what we’ll do! I’ll head out right now.”

Linley’s divine fire, divine water, and divine earth clones merged into one, leading Delia’s group towards the Jadefloat Continent’s teleportation array and returning to the Yulan continent.

As for Linley’s original body, divine wind clone, and Bebe, they departed from the Jadefloat Continent and made haste towards the Muja Continent!

The Jadefloat Continent was located in the eastern part of the Infernal Realm, while the Muja Continent was in the southern part! The distance between the two was far closer than the distance between the Redbud Continent and the Muja Continent.

Given Linley’s current level of power, the speed at which he closed in on the Muja Continent was extremely fast.

“Whoosh!”

A metallic lifeform pressed against the surface of the Starmist Sea, advancing at high speed. Two years had passed since leaving the Fiend Castle.

“Based on the intelligence report we received, eight years have passed since Brodie killed the Lotte tribe’s chief.” Linley frowned. “Eight years...where has Brodie fled to?”

“Boss, do you think Brodie is like you? He’s just a Highgod who fused a divine spark. He won’t be able to make it that far.” Bebe was extremely confident. “The Muja Continent is so vast. Based on the location of that tribe, Brodie definitely hadn’t flown from the Muja Continent yet.”

“That’s not what I’m worried about. It’s...the teleportation arrays!” Linley said, worried. “The Lotte clan was roughly a billion kilometers away from one of the teleportation arrays of the Muja Continent. A billion kilometers, for a Highgod, even one traveling with his wife....eight years is more than enough to get there.”

“Boss, are you saying...?” Bebe was startled.

“Right. If he paid money to teleport to another plane, then things will be difficult.” Linley was worried about precisely this.

If he teleported away through the transportation arrays, especially to another one of the Divine Planes or Higher Planes, such as the Netherworld, he would be randomly assigned to one of the two teleportation arrays of the Netherworld.

“Uh...” Bebe frowned. “Boss, we heard this news a bit late. Without question, quite a few people learned of this before we did. The Muja Continent has quite a few experts as well, and their movements will have definitely been faster than ours. I imagine that they would have surrounded his region. Brodie wouldn’t be able to flee as easily as he wishes to.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“But Boss.” Bebe suddenly said with a frown. “I’ve discovered a problem. Although I saw Brodie in the sryer recording, I don’t know anything about his aura. However, if Brodie changes his appearance, even if he stands before us, we wouldn’t be able to recognize him.”

Linley let out a resigned laugh.

“I thought of this issue long ago. Indeed, this is the case; we’ve never seen him before! Thus, if he changes his appearance, we wouldn’t recognize him even if he stood right in front of us! But we can do a few things. First, we can go to the Lotte tribe and invite someone who lived there to accompany us. The Lotte tribesmen definitely should recognize Brodie and know his aura. Upon seeing Brodie himself, the tribesmen will definitely know who he is. Secondly, we can wait for others to catch Brodie first. After all, quite a few people are in pursuit of him, and all of them are quite cunning. They will surely have many methods by which they can spread out their web of influence to catch him.”

“That’s all we can do.” Bebe nodded.

By now, the metallic lifeform had already entered the Muja Continent region. Only, the Lotte tribe was in the center of the Muja Continent.

On the way over, Linley and Bebe travelled for a total of three years. They were now finally nearing one of the cities close to the Lotte tribe. The governor of the Fiend Castle of this city knew who Linley was, and began to immediately and warmly assist him.

“Mr. Linley, during this recent period of time, many experts have come in search of that Brodie. More than a hundred Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends have come to visit our Fiend Castle alone. All of them went

to invite members of the Lotte clan to assist, and they also set up their influence webs to search for him on a large scale.”

“Have they tracked down Brodie?” Linley asked.

“Three years ago, Brodie made a return trip to the Lotte tribe before departing once more.” The bald, silver-robed man said hurriedly.

“Three years ago?” Linley couldn’t help but feel a surge of delight.

A Highgod who had fused with a divine spark wouldn’t be able to travel too far in three years.

“Aside from that visit three years ago, did no one else find any trace of Brodie during these past three years?” Linley asked.

“Some have. It was just two months ago. A Six Star Fiend found him, but that Brodie was too sly; he managed to escape.” The governor laughed while speaking.

Linley nodded slightly. Two months ago? It seemed as though Brodie shouldn’t have been able to run too far away.

“Tell me the exact location of the Lotte tribe.” Linley said.

“Mr. Linley, how about I personally accompany you on a visit to the Lotte tribe?” The governor was very friendly.

“That won’t be necessary.” Linley laughed calmly.

After learning the precise address, Linley and Bebe immediately made haste to the Lotte tribe.

In recent years, the Lotte tribe had been visited quite a few times by Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends, who had invited tribesmen to accompany them for a very high price.

“All of them are standing on the mountain, hoping for an expert to take them in search of Brodie. They are all doing this for money.” A grim, black-faced old man glanced at the tribesmen who were standing atop the tall mountains. He couldn’t help but let out a cold snort.

“The payment those experts offered is exceedingly high. Generally speaking, ten million inkstones or more. Just recently, our chieftain himself received a hundred million inkstones in remuneration. Our chief’s divine clone immediately took this wealth to a city to live a peaceful life. If someone were to invite me and give me a hundred million inkstones, I would accept, even if it cost me a divine clone.” A round, chubby-faced, adorable-looking youth spoke out eagerly.

Indeed, the lives of many of the tribesmen of the Lotte tribe had changed dramatically.

After all, only a single divine clone was needed for going to recognize a person.

“In your dreams. Do you think that those experts truly don’t care about money?” The black-faced elder snickered. “The vast majority were only given ten million; only a single person was given a hundred million. Kid, you want someone to give you a hundred million? How laughable. Focus on your training. In the end, personal power speaks loudest!”

“Hmph.” The chubby-faced youth, upon hearing this, couldn’t help but let out a low snort, no longer speaking with the grim elder.

“Whoosh!”

A blur flashed past, and two figures appeared before them.

The round-faced youth and the grim elder were both badly startled. This speed was simply too fast. They carefully looked at the person in front of them. The newcomers were a brown-haired youth and an adorable, skinny youngster.

“You are...?” The grim elder couldn’t help but speak in surprise. He had never before seen someone as fast as these two.

Linley swept them with his gaze. Nodding, he said, “Do the two of you recognize Brodie?”

“I do, I do.” The round-faced youth immediately came to his senses and called out, “Brodie and I were neighbors for nearly a thousand years.”

“Don’t listen to him spout rubbish.” The grim elder said hurriedly. “That kid just lived with Brodie on the same mountain. Although Brodie and I weren’t neighbors, we often met. I would recognize him at a single glance.” Although earlier he acted as though everything was beneath him, when opportunity came knocking, the grim elder grew excited as well.

Laughing calmly, Linley nodded. “Fine, then. The two of you, follow me. On this trip, there will be many experts who will be fighting over the treasure, and I will be one of them. I might not be able to protect you two. How about this. If you follow me, each of you will receive five hundred million inkstones.”

“Five hundred million inkstones?”

The round-faced youth and the grim elder exchanged glances, then stared around themselves, quite cautious

“There is nobody nearby.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Hey, old fellow, we’re now on the same boat. Don’t go running around bragging wildly. Wait for us to enter the city, then brag.” The round-faced youth sent mentally.

“Don’t worry about me. Worry about yourself.” The grim elder said.

“Prepare to head out.” Linley immediately paid each person five hundred million inkstones. As Linley saw it, to give them five hundred million inkstones wasn’t that much, given that he was causing two Gods to face such danger. But to these low-level denizens of the Infernal Realm, upon acquiring five hundred million inkstones, they would be able to live an extremely comfortable life in the Infernal Realm in the future.

The black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform was advancing at high speed.

“So fast.” The round-faced youth and the grim elder were both quite stunned.

They had both released their divine clones and had them take their newfound wealth and keep it peacefully within the Lotte tribe. They were waiting for their opportunity; for the Lotte tribe’s metallic lifeform to head to a city. Only then would they leave together.

“Boss, according to the intelligence reports of the city, two months ago, Brodie appeared in this region.” Bebe said.

“I know.”

Linley had already completely extended his divine sense, and everything within eight million kilometers was now within Linley’s range of inspection.

“There are no powerful experts nearby.” Linley continued to hasten forward.

Given the speed at which Linley was able to control the metallic lifeform, in but a few days, he would be able to completely investigate the hundred million kilometer area surrounding this place. Given Brodie's speed, in two months, he would at most be able to move a hundred million kilometers or so. The other Seven Star Fiends who relied on Sovereign power to investigate, however, would have a far smaller reach than Linley did.

In addition, given how fast Sovereign power leaked out, they wouldn't be able to search for too long.

This made it that these people would find it hard to find Brodie!

However, Linley didn't recognize Brodie either. What he needed to find was a place where many experts were gathering. That would be the place where Brodie was!

"Lord Chegwin, that Brodie fled into these Neville Mountains [Ne'wei'er]."

A dragon-shaped metallic lifeform flew through the skies. There were six individuals within it, with the leader being someone with long green robes, violet lips, and a closed eye-slit in the middle of his forehead. This devilish-looking man was the person who had just barely escaped dying in Linley's hands not long ago; Chegwin!

In the Stellar Corridor of the Planar Battlefield, Linley had killed two people at one go, but Chegwin had been able to escape thanks to his two protective Sovereign artifacts.

"The two of you, lead one of the Lotte tribesmen inside to search for Brodie. No matter what, I must acquire that red caltrop diamond."

"Yes, milord." The two Seven Star Fiends bowed, then each led a group of people into the Neville Mountains. At the same time, they left behind a divine clone within the metallic lifeform, so as to be able to report back to Chegwin at all times.

Two months had passed. As time had gone on... Brodie, no matter how crafty he was, found that the area in which he could hide in was growing smaller and smaller. By now, the only place left for him was the Neville Mountains!

"Lord Chegwin, I have discovered Brodie. However, there is another Seven Star Fiend who has also located him." One of the Seven Star Fiend's divine clones said hurriedly.

"Let's go." Chegwin's eyes lit up and he barked hurriedly.

He immediately collected his metallic lifeform. Chegwin didn't even pay any attention to those Lotte tribesmen, instead immediately following the Seven Star Fiend's divine clone to advance forward rapidly.

"Chegwin, where are you rushing towards?" A familiar voice rang out in Chegwin's mind.

Chegwin turned his head, only to see four figures fly over.

"You... Linley?" Chegwin's face changed dramatically.

"I discovered quite a few people moving in this direction. It seems as though that darkness-element Highgod being chased is Brodie." Linley laughed calmly. As soon as his divine sense had located Chegwin, he had immediately hurried over. Given Chegwin's power... he definitely had a chance to seize Brodie.

Unfortunately...

Linley had arrived!

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 27,

The Critical Point

“Lord Chegwin, the struggle going on up ahead for the red caltrop diamond is extremely tight. We need to go there right away.” One of the two Seven Star Fiends by Chegwin’s side sent frantically to Chegwin.

“Shut your mouth.” Chegwin sent back.

Although these two Seven Star Fiends were Chegwin’s subordinates, they didn’t participate in the last Planar War. Chegwin hadn’t told anyone about Linley either, and so these two didn’t recognize him.

“I didn’t expect that Linley would come as well.” Chegwin began to worry. “According to the intelligence reports regarding this red caltrop diamond, it is very likely that this is an Overgod talisman. Even if it isn’t, it is a Sovereign artifact level treasure. If I can acquire it, I would offer it to the Chief Sovereign! Perhaps the Chief Sovereign would think of a way to help me acquire a third Sovereign artifact.”

The Overgod talisman was within his grasp! How could Chegwin bear to give it up?

“I didn’t expect that you, Mr. Linley, would come as well.” Chegwin laughed calmly. “Might I ask what you have come here for, Mr. Linley?”

“Recently, there has been much rumor regarding this ‘red caltrop diamond’ treasure. I’m quite curious about it.” Linley said with a calm laugh while flying forward. “Chegwin, let us travel together.”

“It would be my honor.” Chegwin wasn’t impatient, instead opting to follow behind Linley.

Chegwin had seen Linley’s power, and he knew that if he were to fight against Linley head on, Linley would be able to kill his subordinates with the flip of a hand. As for Chegwin himself... although he had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact and a defensive Sovereign artifact, making it hard for even Linley to kill him, it wouldn’t be too hard for Linley to drive him into chaotic space.

Chegwin didn’t have any divine clones located elsewhere. If he were to be driven into chaotic space, it would be hard for even a Sovereign to locate him.

After all, chaotic space was so boundlessly vast that it was comparable to nearly almost all of the other planes combined.

How would a Sovereign search for someone in such a vast expanse of space? The only way it could be done was if a divine clone accompanied the Sovereign to point the Sovereign in the correct direction.

“Lord Chegwin, the experts over there are more and more numerous. If you don’t intervene, then Leer [Li’ya] and I won’t be able to hold on by ourselves.” The Seven Star Fiend sent frantically.

“Don’t be impatient.” Chegwin sent back. “Linley arrived. It won’t be so easy for others to acquire the red caltrop diamond.”

“Linley. Who is he?” The Seven Star Fiend sent back while giving a glance at Chegwin. Chegwin had never mentioned Linley to him in the past...after all, the story was an embarrassing one for Chegwin. Why would he discuss it with his subordinates?

“A Highgod Paragon.” This was Chegwin’s sole response.

The Seven Star Fiend was badly frightened.

As for Linley, he was puzzled. “Chegwin is the Emissary of the Chief Sovereign of Light. Can it be that he is here because the Chief Sovereign of Light has asked him to search for the Overgod talismans?” What Linley was worried about was that the Sovereigns were paying attention to this matter. Linley swept Chegwin with his gaze. Chegwin was currently behaving extremely respectfully.

The two Highgods behind Chegwin were fairly average in strength. Linley had never heard of them, nor did he care about them.

As far as the current Linley was concerned, ordinary Seven Star Fiends were indeed nothing. Even Lord Prefects and Asuras would just attract a bit of attention from Linley. After all...he already stood at the true peak. Amongst Deities, there were none capable of defeating him!

“Chegwin, I plan to speed up. Come with me.” With but a thought, Linley sent divine earth power surging out, surrounding the group of people.

“Swish!”

A ray of earthen yellow light shot through the air, and a heartbeat later, Linley’s group had already arrived at a location deep within the Neville Mountains.

Deep within the Neville Mountains. A hundred figures were flocking here.

“Haha, I didn’t imagine that I, Brodie, would actually draw attention from and be surrounded by so many experts.” Laughter rang out from one mountain forest, and then, in midair, multiple figures suddenly appeared. There was a single figure within the forest as well. Clearly, these people had already completely surrounded Brodie.

Only, nobody dared to go seize it.

“So many people have actually come for it.” A big-bearded muscular dwarf mumbled, his green eyes sweeping the others with his gaze. “I recognize fifty six Seven Star Fiends, and the others are probably Six Star Fiends. In addition, there are even one or two Asura-level experts mixed in.”

Everyone understood that the red caltrop diamond was a hot, yet hard-to-hold item.

Most likely, if anyone went to seize it, that person would suffer the attacks of the rest of the group. Nobody was confident in being able to seize it, then survive an array of attacks from this huge group of Seven Star Fiends.

Right at this moment...

A black-robed, loose-haired man slowly flew out from the mountain forest. His eyes were filled with amusement, and he casually glanced at the group of people surrounding him. “Haha...unexpected, truly unexpected. I, Brodie, was actually able to cause so many experts to join forces in pursuing me. Such an honor this is! Even if I, Brodie, were to die, it would be worth it.”

This person was Brodie. Surrounded by multiple layers of people, he no longer ran and revealed himself instead.

“Swoosh!” Just as Brodie spoke out, a green figure suddenly flew towards him, clearly wanting to seize the initiative.

“Hmph!” A cold snort rang out.

“Rumble...” A fiery red blade shadow rose from the heavens, shattering through space and instantly chopping down upon that green figure’s body. A blurry light suddenly flashed in the green figure’s eyes, and he managed to resist the power of this terrifying attack. Still, he was knocked flying away.

Instantly, all of the other foolish, impulsive people retrained themselves, not daring to attack.

At this moment...

The loose-haired Brodie stood there in the air above the mountain forest, surrounded by a large number of supreme experts. Brodie, however, didn’t seem to know that he had reached the end of the line. He actually smiled as he looked at them, then said in a clear voice, “Everyone, tell me, with so many of you here, who should I actually give the diamond to?”

The many Seven Star Fiends and Six Star Fiends all looked at each other, not making any sound.

“That’s the easiest question ever.” A clear voice rang out. “Just give it directly to my Boss.”

A large sphere of earthen yellow light suddenly appeared in midair. The earthen yellow aura dissipated, revealing seven people. It was Chegwin and his two subordinates, along with Linley, Bebe, and the two tribesmen they had brought with them.

“What incredible speed.” Chegwin’s two subordinates were stunned.

“Lord Chegwin.” Upon seeing Chegwin, quite a few of the Six and Seven Star Fiends called out in surprise. They were all stunned. After all, compared to Linley, Chegwin had been famous for far long, for countless years. Even amongst ‘commanders’, he was a supreme expert ranked close to the top. Chegwin’s information had been public for a long time now.

But Linley had only participated in a single Planar War very recently. News about him had yet to truly spread.

Although there were a group of Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends here, while Chegwin was in alone, in truth, he could still fight them all. Because he had two Sovereign artifacts!

“It looks like we have no hope.” The big-bearded dwarf said with a snicker.

“No hope at all.” A callous, silver-haired youth gave a sidelong glance at the distant Chegwin as well.

Chegwin was able to fight against everyone here. Even if they all fought over the red caltrop diamond, Chegwin would be able to seize it. In addition, these Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends were no fools. All of them knew that if one had to compare the value of their lives with the value of a treasure, their lives were still more important!

“You...you are Lord Linley?” Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Linley turned to look, only to see a Six Star Fiend staring at Linley in surprise.

“What, you recognize my Boss?” Bebe winked at this Six Star Fiend.

“Ah, Lord Linley. I just participated in the previous Planar War. I was fortunate enough to see Lord Linley and Lord Magnus battle. I didn’t imagine that you would come as well!” This Six Star Fiend was very excited. He then glanced at the surrounding people and said loudly, “Everyone, now that Lord Linley has come, there’s no point to fighting. This red caltrop diamond will go to Lord Linley.”

“He’s Lord Linley?”

Of the hundred-plus people present, there were two or three others who knew of Linley. Only, they didn't know what he looked like or what his aura was like, and so they weren't able to recognize him at a glance.

Chegwin smiled as well. "Everyone, the person by my side is the number one expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan, the Highgod Paragon, Lord Linley. Everyone, do you still want to fight over the red caltrop diamond?" Hearing these words, the other Six and Seven Star Fiends were simultaneously shocked and began to repeat the same words.

"Highgod Paragon?"

That was an invincible individual who was able to execute commander-level experts as easily as cutting grass. If he wanted the red caltrop diamond, who would be able to take it from him?

Linley couldn't help but glance at Chegwin. Chegwin was actually speaking on his behalf?

"Lord Chegwin?" Brodie, hearing those surprised calls, had begun to understand that Chegwin was probably a supreme expert. But now, it seemed, that next to Chegwin was a legendary Highgod Paragon. "Linley?" Brodie gave Linley a close look.

"Brodie, hand over the red caltrop diamond and offer it to Lord Linley. His Lordship might spare your life. If you don't hand it over..." Immediately, a Seven Star Fiend who stood far above him snapped out in a cold voice.

"Shut your mouth, punk!" Brodie raised his head and bellowed angrily.

"You..." The Seven Star Fiend was enraged.

"Hmph. I don't give a damn if you are a Seven Star Fiend, a Lord Prefect, a Sovereign's Emissary...and even if you are a Highgod Paragon, so what?" Brodie raised his head to stare at the surrounding area, then intentionally stared straight at Linley. "Let me tell you this. The red caltrop diamond is in my interspatial ring! If you want to seize it, then I will crush it!"

An interspatial ring was being held between Brodie's fingers.

If he applied force to it, it would definitely shatter.

Linley felt anxious. "If Brodie really does go berserk and breaks the interspatial ring, although the red caltrop diamond inside it won't be destroyed, it will be trapped into chaotic space. How will I then find it?"

"Brodie, don't be too hotheaded. If you break it, you will definitely die." Chegwin barked coldly.

"Do you think I don't dare to?" Brodie stared straight back at Chegwin.

"Shut your mouth." Linley gave Chegwin a cold glance, and all Chegwin could do to respond was to laugh awkwardly, then step back. In his heart, though, he felt extremely bitter. Linley, in turn, understood: "Chegwin isn't able to acquire it for himself, so he probably actually wants Brodie to destroy it so that I won't be able to acquire it either."

"All of you, listen up."

Brodie laughed smugly. He suddenly felt as though what he was doing right now, barking orders at a large group of Six Star Fiends, Seven Star Fiends, and a Paragon, was quite an impressive accomplishment. Paragons...what untouchably lofty figures were they! But today, he, Brodie, was able to put on airs in front of a Highgod Paragon!

“You’d best not piss me off. If you do, I’ll shatter this interspatial ring, and none of you will be able to acquire it.” Brodie snickered.

The Seven Star Fiends and Six Star Fiends didn’t dare to make a sound. They were afraid of angering Brodie into shattering the ring, thus causing Linley, who would be angry at having lost a chance to acquire the red caltrop diamond, to vent his rage upon them. That would be terrible.

Linley looked at Brodie, then laughed. “Brodie, speak. What do you want in exchange for giving me this red caltrop diamond?”

“Paragons really are Paragons. You are so straightforward.”

Brodie smiled. “Simple. First of all, you need to guarantee my survival, and that I’ll live to teleport through a transportation array and leave the Infernal Realm! Second, you need to give me tens of trillions of inkstones. I trust this sum isn’t anything for a Paragon like yourself. Third, you have to give me some Sovereign’s Might. I don’t need too much, just a few dozen drops. I need to stay alive as well. If you agree to my three conditions, I will give you this red caltrop diamond!” Brodie said it all in one breath. This was a price he felt was very, very high!

“Whoah...”

Instantly, deep breaths could be heard from everywhere.

Letting Brodie leave safely wasn’t an issue, but the next two requirements were too wild.

Tens of trillions of inkstones? Generally speaking, the total net worth of a Seven Star Fiend was just a trillion inkstones or so. As for Sovereign’s Might...ordinary Seven Star Fiends would dream of acquiring so much as a single drop! Yet this Brodie said he didn’t want too much, ‘just’ a few dozen! What a greedy demand this was!

“Fine. I agree.” Linley smiled and nodded, the look on his face unchanging.

Brodie was stunned.

He had made extravagant demands with the goal of making Linley bargain with him...but Linley had just straightforwardly agreed.

“Paragons are this wealthy?” Brodie mused to himself.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 28, Toyed With

Brodie was a God to begin with. He acquired the red caltrop diamond by accident, then killed quite a few bandits, acquired a darkness-element Highgod spark, fused it, and became a Highgod. His experiences were quite limited! He had only lived in a single tribe. How much wealth had he seen?

After killing the tribe's chief, 'Allott', and acquiring his interspatial ring, Brodie had instantly acquired a fortune of hundreds of millions of inkstones, which had completely stupefied him.

Just now, he was just listing an extravagant sum for negotiating purposes. He was just talking.

"There are fifty trillion inkstones and fifty drops of Destruction-type Sovereign's Might inside this." Linley removed an interspatial ring, smiling as he looked at Brodie. "As long as you give me the red caltrop diamond, it is yours."

Fifty trillion inkstones, fifty drops of Sovereign's Might?

The gazes of the surrounding Six and Seven Star Fiends grew heated. In truth, a single drop of Sovereign's Might was worth far more than fifty trillion inkstones. Unfortunately, Brodie didn't understand how much Sovereign's Might was worth in terms of inkstones. He had only used inkstones before, so that was naturally what he wanted. As for Sovereign's Might, he had only heard of it.

"Wonderful." Brodie laughed as he looked at Linley. "You really are a Highgod Paragon. It seems my asking price was too low."

Those surrounding Six Star Fiends, Seven Star Fiends, and guides from the Lotte tribe couldn't help but stare at Brodie. He had asked for an astronomical sum already; could it be that this Brodie didn't feel satisfied and wanted more?

"But I, Brodie, live up to my word. If I asked a low price, then I asked a low price." Brodie laughed as he looked at Linley. "Lord Linley, I originally made three requests. The first one was that you have to safely escort me away from the Infernal Realm."

"I, Linley, swear by the Overgod of Life that if you, Brodie, hand me the red caltrop diamond, I will send you safely away from the Infernal Realm." Linley said straightforwardly.

Brodie was startled.

"Excellent." Brodie lowered his head, looking at the interspatial ring, a pleased smile on his face. "Then Lord Linley, this interspatial ring is now yours!" As he spoke, he tossed it out.

Right at this moment...

"Swish!" "Swish!"

Two rays of translucent light shot towards Brodie from behind.

"Soul attacks?" Linley's face changed.

Highgod Paragons were fast, but they weren't faster than soul attacks!

“The ring.” Linley flew forward.

Suddenly, an arm stretched out, grabbing Linley by the shoulder. Linley turned, only to see that it was the nearby Chegwin who had grabbed him. Linley’s gaze instantly turned cold. He stared coldly at Chegwin, then sent furiously, “Chegwin, you are looking for death.” At the same time, Linley’s shoulder vibrated, knocking Chegwin’s hand aside.

“Haha, Mr. Linley, don’t be impatient.”

Right at this moment...

A surge of terrifying, devouring force was applied to Linley’s body. Linley wanted to fly towards Brodie, but wasn’t able to move that quickly.

“This is...?” Linley turned to look. Behind Chegwin had appeared the enormous illusion of a gigantic divine beast, the Suanni Lion! Chegwin was like Dylin; his original form was that of the divine beast, ‘Suanni Lion’, and he had a third eye. Only, Linley had never cared, because although the gravitational pull of Chegwin’s innate divine ability might be strong, he wouldn’t be able to devour Linley!

But Chegwin had suddenly used Sovereign’s Might first, then used his innate divine ability, ‘Heaven Devourer’.

The power of the pull of this technique was so great that although Linley was able to resist it, he wasn’t able to move quickly.

“This...” Those Six and Seven Star Fiends were stunned. Had the Sovereign’s Emissary, Chegwin, gone stupid? He actually dared to act against a Highgod Paragon? Bebe was stunned as well...but two people didn’t hesitate; the two Seven Star Fiends Chegwin commanded.

The two Seven Star Fiends, while launching their soul attacks, also threw themselves towards Brodie.

Everyone was situated fairly close to Brodie to begin with, while Linley was tied down by Chegwin, who had used both Sovereign’s Might and his innate divine ability. In that short period of time, Brodie’s ‘interspatial ring’ fell into the hands of one of the two Seven Star Fiends; that callous, green-haired man.

The effect of the ‘Heaven Devourer’ ability wore off.

“Chegwin!” Linley, enraged, moved to grab Chegwin by the arm.

“Mr. Linley...oh, that is, ‘mighty Highgod Paragon, Lord Linley’. Please let go of me. Otherwise, my subordinates will shatter that interspatial ring.” Chegwin wasn’t nervous at all.

Linley stared coldly at Chegwin.

“I have two Sovereign artifacts. You won’t be able to kill me. At most, you will drive me into chaotic space.” Chegwin laughed calmly.

Chegwin didn’t fear Linley.

Chegwin currently had leverage over Linley. If Linley were to attack, Chegwin’s subordinates would immediately shatter the interspatial ring.

“Excellent.” Linley began to laugh from rage.

The red caltrop diamond did in fact impact Linley’s mindset. In Linley’s heart...this last talisman, the red caltrop diamond, represented the life of Linley’s grandpa. Perhaps if it was something else, he would have

mercilessly driven Chegwin into chaotic space and killed those two Seven Star Fiends. But for this...he was not!

The air above the Neville Mountains. More than a hundred experts were watching as Linley released Chegwin.

“Has Chegwin gone insane? He is offending a Paragon. Can it be that Chegwin believes that in the future, the Sovereign will always be protecting him?”

“It would be impressive if a Sovereign lowered himself to help defend against a Deity even once. He can’t always do that.”

Those Six and Seven Star Fiends all believed that Chegwin had gone stupid. After all, in the Infernal Realm, virtually everyone believed that the grudges of Deities was a matter to remain between Deities. Sovereigns were lofty and far above Deities; they might occasionally intervene, but if they did so often, most likely they would be secretly criticized.

But no matter what, the interspatial ring was in Chegwin’s hands.

“Boss.” Bebe said frantically.

“It’s fine.” Linley stared coldly at the distant Chegwin, then sent mentally, “Perhaps the situation won’t be too terrible.”

“Eh?” Bebe looked at Linley, puzzled.

“Boss? What are you saying?” Bebe didn’t understand Linley’s words.

“I saw those two people suddenly attack Brodie.” Linley sent. “I was worried...but not that they would seize the ring. It was that Brodie would instantly shatter the ring. Although a soul attack is fast, an automatic response by a Deity, a clenching of the fingers, is unquestionably faster.”

Bebe nodded as well, agreeing to that.

One might not be able to dodge a soul attack, but one would still be able to react. It would be simple to crush a ring.

“But Brodie didn’t crush it. He was killed, but he still didn’t crush this ring.” Linley sent.

“Boss, are you saying...?” Bebe began to guess what the answer was.

“Actually, when I only saw Brodie and didn’t find his wife, I began to suspect...that this Brodie was nothing more than bait! Only, I had thought that perhaps Brodie separated from his wife in order to protect her. I didn’t think too much about it.” Linley looked carefully at the distant Chegwin and the other two. “But now...even at the point of death, Brodie didn’t crush the interspatial ring. And so, I truly have some suspicions about it.”

“Boss, are you saying that there is no red caltrop diamond within the interspatial ring?” Bebe sent.

“Possibly.” Linley sent back. “But it’s hard to say. If Brodie still has a surviving divine clone, then the ring shouldn’t be accessible.”

The two Seven Star Fiends serving Chegwin merged with their clones, and then offered the interspatial ring to Chegwin. Chegwin held the ring, then laughed mockingly towards Linley. “Linley, in the Planar War, you were quite incredible, but now...this treasure is mine.”

Although this was what Chegwin was saying, he felt puzzled as well. He couldn't help but glance at the corpse of Brodie which lay in the mountain forest. "This Brodie actually didn't crush the ring before dying."

Chegwin's earlier actions hadn't been intended to acquire the interspatial ring for himself. Rather, Chegwin wanted Brodie to destroy the ring and make it so that no one could acquire it!

"Drip!"

A drop of fresh blood fell down from Chegwin's finger, landing atop the interspatial ring.

"If the Boss guessed accurately, then this 'Brodie' was just bait. He must have had other divine clones that fled, and so there's no way to open this interspatial ring." Bebe stared closely at it. Linley stared as well...and the surrounding hundred experts all watched as Chegwin bound it by blood.

The drop of blood fell atop the interspatial ring. Under everyone's gaze, the blood slowly seeped into it, then was absorbed by it.

"Eh? What just happened." Bebe was shocked.

"Strange." Linley didn't understand. Logically speaking, the interspatial ring shouldn't be bindable!

Only if all of Brodie's clones were dead would the interspatial ring be bindable by blood.

"Can it be that I guessed wrongly. Brodie was struck from behind by soul attacks and was caught off-guard, and so didn't have time to crush the interspatial ring?" Linley frowned.

"Haha..."

Chegwin laughed smugly towards Linley. "Linley, I didn't expect it either. This interspatial ring actually fell into my hands. And I was actually able to bind it with blood...but unfortunately, this interspatial ring is mine now. Even if you drive me into chaotic space, I will take it with me. The Sovereign will definitely save me...and your actions will make it so that the Sovereign has a reason to kill you."

Linley's face sank.

"Haha...are you very angry, very enraged? Too bad. It's useless." Chegwin was very smug, very happy!

"Aren't you very powerful? What, you don't dare attack now?" Chegwin laughed jubilantly.

He had two protective Sovereign artifacts. Even Linley wasn't able to kill him.

"Chegwin, you are formidable." Linley was very calm. "I haven't personally seen the red caltrop diamond. Can you take it out to let us see it?"

"Of course I can!" Chegwin's laughter became positively evil. "Even if I hold the red caltrop diamond on my hand, would you be able to take it from me?" Chegwin wasn't Brodie; there was no way he would be killed via ambush. In addition, with but a thought, Chegwin could store the already bound interspatial ring into his body.

Bebe stared coldly at Chegwin.

"Everyone." Chegwin glanced at the surrounding people. He wanted to make it so that this surrounding group of people would spread the word of how he had held down Linley today. "This red caltrop diamond, according to legend, is an Overgod talisman. But of course, it's uncertain as to whether it is real or not. Since Mr. Linley wishes to see it, I'll satisfy his wish."

As he spoke, Chegwin inserted his divine sense into the interspatial ring.

Chegwin's smile bloomed onto his face as the red caltrop diamond suddenly appeared in his hands. Chegwin smiled as he looked at everyone. "This is the red caltrop diamond! Mr. Linley, have you seen it clearly?" Chegwin smirked towards Linley.

"It really is the red caltrop diamond." Bebe was shocked.

Linley frowned, but he immediately spread out his divine sense...and then a hint of a smile appeared on his lips. "Chegwin, the legendary red caltrop diamond possesses the power to make a Highgod who fused a divine spark to defeat a Six Star Fiend. Have you discovered some particular power in your red caltrop diamond?"

Chegwin was stunned.

In the midst of his joy, he hadn't thought about this at all. And now, he too realized...that this red caltrop diamond didn't contain any unique energy at all.

"Impossible. This came from Brodie's interspatial ring. It is definitely real." Chegwin didn't want to believe it.

"Hmph. There are far too many fake items like this. Brodie's counterfeiting abilities were mediocre; just by checking it with divine sense, one can discover hints that it was manmade." Linley laughed calmly.

"Haha, Linley, stop talking rubbish. You weren't able to get it, so you want to trick me? Nobody has ever seen this red caltrop diamond. Who knows if it is real or not? Perhaps this red caltrop diamond's unique energy needs a special method to guide it out." Chegwin said confidently. "In addition, this is an Overgod talisman. One thing is for certain; Overgod talismans are indestructible. Watch; see how tough it is...."

As he spoke, he applied a bit of force to it with his finger. He was just putting on a show, and didn't actually use much strength.

"Crack!"

The fragile 'red caltrop diamond' shattered at that slight touch! It transformed into countless gemstone shards, falling to the ground.

"This..." Chegwin was instantly stupefied, and he stared with round eyes.

The hundred surrounding experts were all abuzz. They, too, were stunned. So the 'Brodie' they had surrounded and chased for so many years had actually produced a fake 'red caltrop diamond'.

"It is actually fake!"

"Can it be that there was no such treasure to begin with?"

"Lord Chegwin did all that for nothing."

These experts were all chatting amongst themselves. As they saw it, the news that the red caltrop diamond was fake was even more interesting than it would have been if it were real! Even if it was real, they wouldn't have been able to get it! But for it to have been fake...this was just priceless!

Linley gave Chegwin a cold glance, then he turned to look at the round-faced youth by his side. He sent, "Do you know how many divine clones this Brodie had?"

“Although Brodie hid his strength, I am certain that he definitely had more than one divine clone.” The round-faced youth sent with certainty.

Linley nodded slightly. He glanced at the corpse of Brodie on the ground. Linley had already noticed via divine sense that this Brodie only had a single divine spark in his corpse. “Brodie has at least another divine clone somewhere else. In addition, it seems as though he intentionally did not destroy the interspatial ring before dying. This was because this interspatial ring was to be left by him to fool everyone here.”

Linley understood that most likely, Brodie had never bound this interspatial ring by blood!

That was the only explanation for why Chegwin was able to bind the ring with blood after the death of Brodie’s divine clone.

“Brodie played an entire group of supreme experts for fools.” Linley glanced at Brodie’s corpse below. “And then he left behind an interspatial ring with a fake red caltrop diamond inside. Clearly...he wanted to use this method to mock this entire group. For a Highgod who fused with a divine spark to toy with so many people...impressively vicious.”

Linley sighed internally.

“It seems as though Brodie wasn’t quite willing to give up his red caltrop diamond treasure.” Linley now completely understood what Brodie had been thinking.

This divine clone of his was nothing more than bait to attract the attention of many people. Most likely, years ago, when he made a return trip to the tribe, the goal was to draw these people over.

“Most likely, Brodie’s original body has taken the red caltrop diamond and his wife to flee somewhere else long ago.” Linley shook his head.

Still, Linley could accept this outcome.

If the red caltrop diamond had fallen into the hands of the Chief Sovereign of Light, Linley would never have access to it. But for it to be in Brodie’s hands...meant there was still hope.

“Haha...” Chegwin began to laugh from rage. He lowered his head to look at Brodie’s corpse. “I didn’t expect that I, Chegwin, would actually be tricked by you, a Highgod who used a divine spark.” Chegwin was no fool either. Upon learning that the red caltrop diamond was fake, he immediately extrapolated quite a few things.

Quite a few surrounding experts looked at Chegwin.

For the sake of this red caltrop diamond, Chegwin had thoroughly offended Linley! Just now, he even satirized and arrogantly mocked Linley in a smug manner. But after finding out that diamond was fake...he had lost tremendous face. Quite a few experts had secretly used the scryer recording technique to record it down.

“Let’s go.” Linley didn’t want to stay here.

“This Brodie really is crazy.” Bebe glanced at Brodie’s corpse. He had looked down on Brodie, but now...Bebe actually felt that this Brodie had a bit of ability.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 29, Begging to be Spared

“This red caltrop diamond is actually a fake!” Chegwin hovered there in midair, his long green robes fluttering. The muscles at the corners of his eyes were twitching. He couldn’t help but lower his head to look at the corpse of Brodie amidst the mountain forests. “Information which the Fiend Castle guaranteed as being real...definitely wouldn’t be fake. I made my own investigations as well, and the dwellers of the Lotte tribe had proof as well! Thus, the red caltrop diamond definitely was a treasure. Where is the real one, then?”

Chegwin had collected quite a bit of intelligence.

“Your Lordship, Brodie’s corpse only had a single divine spark inside it. We investigated earlier. He had more than just a single divine clone. The true red caltrop diamond must have been taken away by his original body.” A Seven Star Fiend standing behind Chegwin sent mentally to him.

“I know!” Chegwin’s eyes were filled with insidiousness as he let out a cold snort.

Chegwin wasn’t a fool. Of course he knew what Brodie had schemed. The Infernal Realm had countless Demigods and Gods; for some of them to use divine sparks to become Highgods was nothing. There were many Deities who wanted to be dazzlingly glorious for a brief instant, even if it meant dying, so long as it was in an explosive manner!

They didn’t want to die silent, unknown deaths to bandits or in battles. Deaths of no value.

Indeed, Brodie’s death had caused the many Seven Star Fiends here to all remember him!

“He produced a divine clone and toyed with an entire group of experts. Hmph. He probably did so in order to draw our attention here and keep us here, while his original body took his wife and fled somewhere else.” Although Chegwin was enraged, he also deeply embedded the name ‘Brodie’ into his mind.

Actually, if Brodie’s divine clone had shattered the interspatial ring, given Chegwin’s strength, once he calmed down, he probably would’ve still been able to guess at the truth! In addition, the news that Brodie had divine clones could be easily verified by the Lotte tribe. Thus, it would be easy to extrapolate that Brodie’s original body had taken the red caltrop diamond and fled. If he knew he had to die, would he carry the red caltrop diamond with him and waste it?

Since he wouldn’t be able to avoid them, why not intentionally leave behind a ring and use it to mock these experts?

“I’ve been harmed catastrophically by this Brodie.” Chegwin felt bitterness in his heart. He couldn’t help but glance at the distant Linley and Bebe. “If I really did acquire the red caltrop diamond, then it wouldn’t matter if I offended Linley. But I didn’t...given Linley’s temper, he probably won’t let me off easily.”

Previously, although Linley and Chegwin had some disputes in the Planar Battlefield, the main players on that stage were Linley and Magnus, with Chegwin and Oman just being supporting characters. Thus, prior to today, Linley didn’t feel much of a grudge towards Chegwin, and couldn’t be bothered to act mercilessly towards him.

Chegwin understood this as well, which was why when he saw Linley, he didn’t flee.

But now...the situation was different!

“I mocked him directly and insulted him...what is he going to do?” Chegwin felt nervous. He wanted to immediately flee, but right now, Linley and Bebe clearly weren’t paying any attention to him. If he were to immediately flee, he would probably draw Linley’s attention and be captured by Linley.

Thus, Chegwin just stood there quietly, hoping Linley wouldn’t pay attention to him. He would wait for Linley to leave!

And just like that, Chegwin stealthily kept a watch on the distant Linley and Bebe.

Not just Chegwin; all of the hundred-plus Six and Seven Star Fiends were keeping a watch on Linley as well. They all wanted to know...how Linley would take his revenge on Chegwin!

“Let’s go!” Linley’s words caused Chegwin to feel overjoyed.

“Your Lordship, those two are going to leave now.” The two Seven Star Fiends were overjoyed as well. They, too, let out relieved sighs.

“Boss, we’re going to leave, just like that?” Bebe couldn’t help but say.

“Oh...right. I almost forgot about something.” Linley was about to leave, then smile and turned and looked towards the distant Chegwin. “Bebe, it’s good that you reminded me. I might’ve forgotten about this, otherwise. Bebe, just now, who was it that said to me, if I have any ability, I can go ahead and try to drive him into chaotic space?”

Bebe, hearing this, let out an ‘emotional’ sigh and explained cooperatively, “Boss, who else could it be? Of course it is our fearless, intrepid Mr. Chegwin...aside from him, how many others would dare enter chaotic space?”

Linley and Bebe’s question and answer session caused Chegwin’s distant group of three to have changed looks on their faces.

“Flee!” Chegwin instantly sent the mental message.

Immediately, there in the skies above the Neville Mountains, Chegwin and the two Seven Star Fiends serving him scattered in every which way at high speed.

“Swoosh!”

Multiple blurry, dream-like figures flashed about in the skies, and then a single blurred form appeared next to Chegwin. With a ‘bang!’ sound, Chegwin’s fleeing body was brought to a halt, then knocked flying backwards. But then, in a flash, the blurred figure once more appeared in front of Chegwin.

“Mr. Chegwin, where are you planning to go, and without saying a single word?” Linley’s face still had that smile on it as he looked at Chegwin.

But Chegwin saw the cold look in Linley’s eyes!

How could Linley let Chegwin off, given what Chegwin had just done? If he could let even something like that pass, where would Linley’s face go?

For example, Sovereigns might not want to interfere in the matters of Deities, but if a Deity dared to mock a Sovereign or interfere in a Sovereign’s important matters, or violate a Sovereign’s majesty in some manner, that Sovereign probably wouldn’t easily spare the violator either! Linley’s status alone, as a supreme being amongst Deities, made it so that he would not allow others to so easily insult him!

“Lord Linley.” Chegwin forced out a smile. “I...I was muddleheaded for a time.”

“You aren’t muddleheaded.” Linley shook his head repeatedly. “What were you muddleheaded about? You are quite intelligent! Didn’t you say so yourself? Even if I drive you into chaotic space, the almighty Sovereign of Light will intervene and rescue you.”

Chegwin’s face turned ugly.

The Chief Sovereign of Light, save him?

That would be because he was holding the ‘red caltrop diamond’, supposedly an Overgod talisman. For the sake of a possible Overgod talisman, the Chief Sovereign of Light would intervene and expend tremendous efforts in chaotic space to save him! But if he didn’t have the red caltrop diamond, the Chief Sovereign of Light wouldn’t necessarily immediately go save him.

What sort of status did a Chief Sovereign have?

Perhaps, one day, when he was in the mood, he might go save Chegwin. But by then, perhaps a hundred million years or a trillion years would have passed.

“Lord Linley, you have the exalted status of Paragon. I’m not worthy of your anger.” Chegwin said hurriedly. “I, Chegwin, am willing to offer you, Lord Linley, all my wealth and all my Sovereign’s Might. Lord Linley, please spare me this time.” Chegwin looked hopefully at Linley.

But Linley only looked back silently at Chegwin.

Chegwin’s heart clenched.

“Wealth? Sovereign’s Might? Tell me...do I lack for these things?” Linley finally said.

“Lord Linley, what do you wish me to do? Just tell me!” Chegwin said hurriedly.

Chegwin no longer cared about his face. He knew very well...that he had no divine clones outside, and so once he became trapped in chaotic space, even if the Chief Sovereign of Light went to find him, given how enormous chaotic space was, how would the Chief Sovereign of Light locate him? The amount of effort needed would be very great!

Would the Chief Sovereign of Light roam the endless tides of chaotic space for him?

If he were a Paragon, perhaps the Chief Sovereign might do so despite the exhaustion of it. But Chegwin wasn’t yet qualified to make the Chief Sovereign do this for him yet!

“If I become trapped in chaotic space, I might be trapped there forever. Nobody would speak to me, and I wouldn’t be able to see anyone else. I would just be constantly brought by the tides of chaotic space from one place to another. A life worse than death.” Chegwin understood this in his heart.

“Lord Linley?” Chegwin was currently very obedient, very respectful.

“Boss, why waste words with him?” Bebe snorted coldly, then glanced at Chegwin. “Chegwin. You want to just leave, as though nothing happened? You really are a dreamer! If you, Chegwin, were to offend a Sovereign and even seize something belonging to the Sovereign, can it be that just because you begged for mercy, the Sovereign would spare you? Although my Boss can’t compare to Sovereigns, he’s not so easily abused either.”

Linley smiled, then extended his hand, chopping to the side with it...

“Riiiiiiip!”

It was like cloth being torn apart. A hundred meter long spatial tear suddenly appeared, several meters wide. An astonishingly strong suction power filled the surrounding area.

“Linley, the Chief Sovereign won’t spare you!!!” Chegwin began to bellow as he moved to flee.

“Swish.” Linley seemed to have teleported as he suddenly appeared and grabbed him by the neck. He tossed Chegwin backwards, casually, as though he were tossing an animal, sending Chegwin flying into the spatial rift. Chegwin bellowed with rage, “The Chief Sovereign won’t spare you!!!” His voice continued to echo in the area, but the astonishing spatial rift had already completely vanished.

Linley glanced backwards.

“This Chegwin...if he didn’t have Sovereign artifacts protecting him, I would really want to kill him.” Bebe said hatefully. “Now that we’ve driven him into chaotic space, I imagine the Chief Sovereign of Light will eventually go save him.”

Clearly, everything Chegwin had done had caused Bebe to be extremely unhappy.

“Saving him won’t be that easy, unless he has a divine clone in the outside world.” Linley glanced at the group of Six and Seven Star Fiends who had stupefied looks on their faces. Then he said, “Bebe, there’s no point staying here. Let’s go back. Oh, let’s send those two back first.”

Linley and Bebe immediately led the round-faced youth and the grim-looking elder onto their metallic lifeform and left.

In midair, a hundred-plus experts and members of the Lotte tribe sighed in amazement at what they had seen.

“How truly powerful. That is what a Highgod Paragon is like! With a casual swipe of the hand, without using any Sovereign’s Might, he was able to create such a terrifying spatial tear. When will my material attack be a tenth the strength of Lord Linley’s?”

“Supposedly, that Chegwin is comparable in strength to the 108 Asuras of our Infernal Realm, and would be ranked amongst the more powerful ones. Chegwin alone was more than enough to slaughter all of us, but in front of Lord Linley...did you see that? Chegwin was like an infant; when he was grabbed, he wasn’t able to resist at all. With a casual toss, he was thrown into that spatial tear. This Lord Linley...he’s too strong!”

“Earlier, Chegwin was behaving so arrogantly. Haha. That’s what he gets!”

“He deserved it! He should’ve thought about his own status. For someone like him to offend Lord Linley? Isn’t that like delivering a sheep to the mouth of a tiger? He was looking for death.”

In the eyes of this group of experts of the Infernal Realm, it was only reasonable for Linley to teach a lesson to and punish Chegwin in such a manner. If Linley hadn’t done so, he would’ve actually been questioned by people behind his back.

Linley’s group wanted to locate Brodie’s divine clone’s whereabouts, but there was no way to do so. The most likely possibility was that Brodie had left through a teleportation array! There was no need for someone to record his name or other information when using the array, and each year, there were many people in the Infernal Realm who, for the purposes of trade or something else, would travel through a teleportation array.

How would they search for him?

In addition, Linley wasn’t qualified to search for him, because the soldiers who were in command over and guarded over the teleportation arrays belonged to the Sovereigns.

The Divine Light Plane. The Godsgaol Sea!

“Rustle...” Countless waves of deep blue seawater lapped forward. As the number one sea of the Divine Light Plane, the Godsgaol Sea was vast and deep. Deep within it, there was dazzling number of islands, scattered like stars in the skies.

In the air above the sea, there were currently two figures battling against each other, causing space to constantly shatter.

“Screeeech!”

An illusory phantom of an enormous Fire Phoenix that was thousands of meters long had suddenly appeared behind a short red-haired man. And then, the red dot at the center of the man’s forehead suddenly lit up, and a red ray of light shot out, instantly piercing through the skies and shooting towards the long-haired, black-robed man in front of him.

The black-robed man let out a growl, and then layers of watery curtains appeared around him.

“Clash...”

The watery curtains were pierced through, and then the red light entered the black-robed man’s body. The black-robed man’s body trembled, then he spat out a mouthful of blood.

“Blunner [Bu’lun’er], let’s just stop it here.” The black-robed man said hastily. In terms of speed, he was inferior to the man in front of him. Someone fast could flee from a stronger opponent, but someone slow had no choice but to just take more blows and beg for mercy.

“In your dreams.” The red-haired man let out an angry snort, the fiery red sickle in his hand chopping down slowly...

“Riiiiip.” A tear in space formed yet again.

But right at this moment...

“Whoosh!” A green blur suddenly shot out from the spatial tear, and it flew straight towards the red-haired man. The red-haired man was shocked. “Something flew out from the spatial tear? There’s something that can survive, undamaged, in chaotic space?” The red-haired man couldn’t help but reach out to grab it.

A green piece of paper thus appeared in his hands.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 30,

Overgod Decree

When the fiery haired man swept the green piece of paper with his gaze, his face immediately changed dramatically.

The black-robed man, seeing the situation, immediately flew away, fleeing at high speed.

“Just count yourself lucky this time.” The fiery haired man glanced at the black-robed man, but his face was still filled with an excited smile. “This...this is an Overgod decree?” The fiery haired man stroked the Overgod decree. He could sense that this green paper contained an unusual aura, and he couldn't help but feel wildly overjoyed.

He was nothing more than a Seven Star Fiend, not yet at the commander level.

“For it to remain undamaged in chaotic space...this paper is definitely extraordinary. Most likely, only Overgods are capable of creating this sort of unusual paper.” The fiery haired man pondered. “It seems the information on it is true. Mmm. If I were to offer this to a Sovereign, I need to choose the most powerful one. The ancestor of the Augusta clan is the Chief Sovereign of Light. Right. That's where I will go!”

The Overgod decree was useless to him, but if he gave it to a Sovereign, it would be of great use.

He no longer hesitated. The fiery haired man headed straight for the Aumight Island of the Godsgaol Sea.

Aumight Island. The ten thousand meter tall Radiant Temple.

“Whitefire stone. It is completely built from whitefire stone! The Augusta clan really does live up to its reputation as being the number one clan of the multiverse. This temple alone is a priceless treasure.” The fiery haired Blunner sighed in amazement as he viewed the heart of the Aumight Island; the Radiant Temple.

The warriors of the Augusta clan were leading the way from the side.

“Blunner, once you enter the Radiant Temple, don't look around everywhere. There are quite a few major figures who live within the temple. If you irritate one of them, they might kill you.” A nearby silver-haired warrior guard said in a low voice. “Also, you said you have an important treasure to offer the Patriarch that you need to personally offer...if you deceive the Patriarch, you will be doomed.”

In the Augusta clan, there were a good number of Lord Prefect and commander level experts.

As for Seven Star Fiends, it had many. Even the Four Divine Beasts clan, during its most flourishing era, had two or three hundred Seven Star Fiend level Elders. But the Augusta clan was on a level higher than even the Four Divine Beasts clan; after all, aside from clan experts, they also had many associated experts.

“Don't worry. No matter how bold I might be, I wouldn't dare deceive Patriarch Augusta.” Blunner chortled.

He was very confident. If even the Overgod decree couldn't be considered precious, what could?

Everything was as Blunner had expected. The Patriarch of the Augusta clan, Goldman, had originally been very arrogant and icy, but upon seeing the Overgod talisman, he became incomparably excited. He immediately swore that the Augusta clan would definitely reward him. While doing so, Patriarch Goldman immediately burned a piece of paper covered with unusual magic runes, notifying the Chief Sovereign.

“Remember. In a short while, make no sound. When the Chief Sovereign lets you speak, speak. Also, while kneeling, don’t raise your head to stare at the Chief Sovereign.” After burning the runed paper, Goldman hurriedly began to give instructions.

“Yes. Your Lordship.” Blunner was both nervous and excited. This was his first time seeing a Sovereign!

Right at this time, rays of powerful light-type Sovereign power appeared within the main hall of the Radiant Temple. The solidifying light-type Sovereign power quickly condensed into a human shape, then transformed into a person. This person was dressed in loose white robes which were covered with gold patterns.

“Sovereign.” Blunner immediately knelt down, pressing his forehead against the ground in a very respectful manner.

“Father.” Patriarch Goldman just bowed in respect.

“Goldman, is there something you need?” A warm, clear voice rang out.

“Is the speaker a Sovereign? What does the Sovereign look like?” Blunner felt very nervous as he constantly pondered.

Goldman just looked respectfully at his father. The Chief Sovereign of Light was tall and strong. His loose white robes only revealed his musculature, and his long, golden hair seemed as dazzling as the sun. His skin was extremely white, almost crystalline and jadelike. He had no facial hair. His lower jaw was completely slick, but his eyebrows were as golden as his hair.

Golden eyebrows dropped down from his temples.

The Chief Sovereign of Light’s gaze was as warm and soft as jade, seemingly quite gentle. But just by standing there, he gave others the feeling that they were facing the universe itself.

“Father, this is Blunner. He wishes to offer to a treasure. When I saw this treasure, I immediately summoned you, Father.” Goldman produced that green sheet of paper. “This sheet of paper should be the Overgod decree.”

“Overgod decree?”

The formerly soft, mild gaze of the Chief Sovereign of Light instantly sharpened. They focused upon that green paper like two sharp arrows.

“Clash, clash!”

Invisible swords of light struck upon that green paper, sending it flying away, but the green paper itself remained unharmed.

“Haha, Goldman, you’ve done well. This is very possibly the Overgod decree.” As he spoke, the Chief Sovereign of Light stretched his hand out, and the green sheet of paper landed onto his hand. The Chief Sovereign of Light read through the green paper, and as he read, a smile appeared on his face.

“So it truly is real.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light had seen Overgod decrees several times before; he was easily able to determine that this was real.

The Chief Sovereign of Light swept his gaze towards Blunner, who was kneeling there on the ground. Smiling, he said, "Rise and speak." "Thank you, Sovereign." Blunner was so excited that he was trembling. He hurriedly rose to his feet, but his body remained slightly bowed.

"Where did you acquire this Overgod decree from?" The Chief Sovereign of Light asked.

"To answer your question, Sovereign, when I was battling someone, a spatial rift occurred and this Overgod decree flew out from the rift. I just so happened to acquire it. The location of our battle was the air above the Godsgaol Sea." Blunner didn't dare to raise his head and stare directly at the Sovereign. Thus, he kept his head lowered, his gaze only able to see the long white robe.

The Chief Sovereign of Light, upon hearing this, began to smile even more widely.

"Haha, almighty Overgod of Life...so you intentionally delivered the Overgod decree to my Divine Light Plane. It seems this Overgod mission will be for me to complete yet again." The Chief Sovereign of Light couldn't help but laugh.

The Chief Sovereign of Light knew very well!

Given how boundless chaotic space was, if someone or something were to fall into it, it would be virtually impossible for that thing or person to move in any direction through its own volition. Unless one had the abilities of a Sovereign; only then could one move about. As for Highgods, even Highgod Paragons, when they fell into chaotic space, they would find it hard to move freely.

Since that was the case, it would be extremely difficult for them to once more draw close to the edges of a plane.

Even if they drew near, how could they be so lucky as to appear right next to a spatial rift?

Thus, normally speaking, when supreme experts were exiled into it, even if a trillion years passed, they still probably wouldn't be able to escape!

However, the Overgod missions were designed by the Overgods. How could the Overgods allow their decree to perpetually remain within chaotic space? Thus, the Overgods could arrange for it so that even if the Overgod decree fell into chaotic space, they would quickly reappear in other planes. And now...the Overgod decree had appeared in the Divine Light Plane.

It was only natural for the Chief Sovereign of Light to believe that the Overgod had the intention of helping him!

"You did very well." The Chief Sovereign of light looked at Blunner, then smiled. "Oman died. I just so happen to lack a Sovereign's Emissary. Let it be you, then."

Blunner was so excited that his face turned red. "I'll become a Sovereign's Emissary? I'll become a Sovereign's Emissary?" Blunner still felt as though he were in a dream. He couldn't believe it. From an ordinary Seven Star Fiend to an Emissary under the control of the almighty Chief Sovereign of Light...his status would rise greatly, and he would definitely also receive a Sovereign artifact!"

"Hurry and kneel." Patriarch Goldman hurriedly sent mentally.

Blunner came to his senses, then hurriedly knelt down. "Thank you, Sovereign."

"Mm." The Chief Sovereign of Light nodded slightly.

"Father." Patriarch Goldman bowed and said, "Actually, news of the Sovereign decree had already begun to spread some time ago."

“Oh?” The Chief Sovereign of Light frowned in puzzlement.

“The news was only spread about within the Infernal Realm. I just learned it recently myself.” Goldman said hurriedly. “That information described three items in detail; there are no differences between that information and the Overgod decree. Only, there were a few extra points; the news said that one of the three talismans, the ‘nine soul pearls’, as well as the ‘Overgod decree’, was in the hands of the Highgod Paragon, Linley. This news caused a huge stir in the Infernal Realm, but afterwards, it was believed to be false.

The Chief Sovereign of Light lifted an eyebrow. “Linley?”

“Right, Linley.” Goldman said hurriedly.

“It seems that there are indeed some problems with the veracity of this news.” The Chief Sovereign of Light laughed calmly. “That information said that the Overgod decree was in Linley’s hands, but in reality, it flew out from chaotic space into the Divine Light Plane and into my hands. It seems the person who made up this news probably wished to harm Linley.”

But Goldman said hurriedly, “Father, I, on the other hand, believe that it is very possible that the Overgod decree was in Linley’s hands, but he created a spatial rift and intentionally threw it into chaotic space. There’s no point to keeping the Overgod decree, after all, once one knows the information within it.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light nodded slightly.

“Your suggestion is also possible.” The Chief Sovereign of Light pondered momentarily.

Goldman immediately said, “Father, information regarding the Overgod talismans has already spread throughout the Infernal Realm...but it has been viewed as false. Now, it seems, the information is clearly true. That means that perhaps Linley truly did acquire the nine soul pearls and the Overgod talisman. But of course, the Overgod talisman is definitely not in Linley’s hands right now. Those nine soul pearls, however, are.”

“I didn’t expect that we were able to find a clue about one of the three talismans so soon.” The Chief Sovereign of Light smiled and nodded.

“Father, I have some more news to tell you. Just a few months ago, Chegwin was also driven by Linley into chaotic space.” Goldman said hurriedly. “But it’s quite problematic. Chegwin had no divine clones in the outside world.” The speed at which the Augusta clan’s intelligence agents shared information was quite fast.

“What’s this about? It involves this Linley yet again?” The Chief Sovereign of Light couldn’t help but frown.

“It involves the third talisman, the ‘red caltrop diamond’.” Goldman said hurriedly.

“Oh, yet another item?” The Chief Sovereign of Light grew intrigued.

He didn’t care about Chegwin’s life or death, but all three of the talismans were of interest to him.

“Although Chegwin seized the red caltrop diamond, even at the cost of angering Linley, it was discovered that the red caltrop diamond was a fake one. Because Chegwin had offended him, Linley, in his anger, exiled Chegwin into chaotic space.” Goldman said hurriedly.

“Oh.” The Chief Sovereign of Light couldn’t be bothered to care about that.

Sovereigns wouldn’t casually interfere in the battles of Deities.

“Goldman, what sort of a person is Linley?” The Chief Sovereign of Light suddenly asked.

Goldman immediately said, "Father, Linley can be considered a genius. He is also the number one expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan. Soon after becoming famous in the Infernal Realm, he entered the Planar Battlefield. He was nearly killed by Magnus, but Linley made a breakthrough at the border between life and death and became a Paragon. During the final battle of the Planar War, he actually exiled Magnus into chaotic space. In addition, Linley is on extremely good terms with Beirut. One of Beirut's descendants, 'Bebe', is as close to Linley as a true brother."

"On good terms with Beirut?" The Chief Sovereign of Light said coldly, "As soon as I hear Beirut's name, I want to kill him." The Chief Sovereign of Light's eyes had a hint of a murderous intent appear within them.

"Even if you gave Beirut ten times as much courage, he would never dare enter our Divine Light Plane. He only dares to hide in the Infernal Realm." Goldman immediately laughed.

If Linley heard these words, he would definitely be stunned. Clearly, Beirut hadn't paid a trip to the Divine Light Plane at all. He had lied to Linley when he had said he had went to see the Chief Sovereign of Light.

"The Infernal Realm. It's been quite a while since I've gone there."

The Chief Sovereign of Light immediately prepared to leave.

"Father. Although Linley might very well have acquired the nine soul pearls, the other Sovereigns have already investigated. This says that Linley might not have them." Goldman said hurriedly.

"Even if there is a hint of a chance, we cannot let it slip. I would rather kill a thousand by mistake than spare a single one erroneously."

The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly, "What's more, he belongs to the Four Divine Beasts clan and has a deep relationship with Beirut." After speaking, the Chief Sovereign of Light's body completely vanished.

Goldman couldn't help but reveal a hint of a smile on his face. He murmured to himself, "Better to kill a thousand by mistake than spare a single one erroneously?"

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 31, The Chief Sovereign Descends

Indigo Prefecture. The foremost of its ten cities; Indigo City. The northern district.

This was where the Lord Prefect, Beirut, lived. Because it was within the city, there was no need for many prefectural soldiers, but despite that, there were still tens of thousands of maids, servants, and guards. These days, Linley and Bebe remained within Beirut's estate, paying attention to any news which came from the Infernal Realm regarding the red caltrop diamond.

Linley and Bebe's estate. Linley was seated atop a stone chair, flipping through an intelligence report.

"Boss, any news about the red caltrop diamond?" Bebe came out from the door, asking with a smirk.

Linley finished the report, tossing it to the table and shaking his head with a laugh. "There's no news at all. These intelligence reports are as useful as catching the wind or chasing after shadows; there isn't a single report that comes close to that report regarding Brodie. Unfortunately, the soldiers in control of the Muja Continent's teleportation array belong to their Sovereign and can't be ordered about by normal people. The Muja Army has countless soldiers. It truly is too difficult to discover where Brodie might have been teleported to.

Up till now, Linley still believed...

The red caltrop diamond which Brodie had acquired was probably real! The divine clone he had left behind was done to entangle pursuers and draw their attention. As to where Brodie's true body had gone? Linley very much wanted to know.

"It is tricky." Bebe sat down, then grabbed a red, slick fruit on the table. He began to chomp it down, and juice dribbled from the corner of his lips. "The soldiers in charge of the Muja Continent's teleportation array are constantly changing. This month, one squad is in charge of sending people away from the Infernal Realm; next month, it's another squad. The number of soldiers that one would need to speak to in order to thoroughly investigate several decades worth of events will most likely be quite high! If you were to go openly and boldly, you will definitely draw attention from the Muja Sovereign!"

Linley nodded slightly.

Last time, he had many excuses for as to why he went to catch Brodie. He could just say that he was interested in this treasure and wanted to see it for himself. After all, even ordinary Lord Prefects and Seven Star Fiends who saw that intelligence report and snyder recordings were moved to find it. Actually, many of those who went in search of the red caltrop diamond didn't actually believe it was an Overgod talisman.

They only went in search of it because of the unusual abilities it had displayed.

But for now, that matter was temporarily on hold. If Linley were to openly go to the Muja Continent and investigate in such a thorough manner, others would certainly feel suspicious! After all, given the status of a Paragon, the red caltrop diamond shouldn't be too useful. If one occasionally investigated, that was one thing, but if one constantly investigated, it was indeed suspicious.

Bebe pursed his lips and snorted. "Brodie really was a bit greedy."

“A Highgod who fused with a divine spark, and a treasure that allows him to easily defeat Six Star Fiends. He knows what matters.” Linley laughed calmly. “In addition, I imagine that after passing through the teleportation array, he paid the fee several times and teleported through multiple planes. Who knows where he ended up?”

Bebe nodded in agreement as well.

“So we won’t be able to get it?” Bebe said unhappily.

“One day, we will.” Linley said with a calm laugh. Still, his words lacked conviction.

Linley had already sent his other three divine clones to lead his family and friends back to the Yulan continent. Linley remained here because he indeed to acquire the red caltrop diamond at any cost! To Linley, the red caltrop diamond represented the only chance Grandpa Doehring had of coming back to life! There was no way Linley would give up!

Bebe, seeing the look on Linley’s face, nodded as well. “After Brodie acquired the red caltrop diamond, of course he wouldn’t be willing to be ordinary again. There will come the day when news of him once more spreads out.”

Linley laughed and nodded in agreement.

“Whoosh...” The cool wind of the Infernal Realm blew past the white phosphorous tree within the courtyard. The leaves of it, already yellow, floated down in the breeze, covering the courtyard with in a layer.

“Eh?”

Linley and Bebe’s faces turned grave. They couldn’t help but stare upwards, and upon doing so, Linley couldn’t help but narrow his eyes. “What an eye-piercing brilliance.” That figure in midair seemed like a scorching white sun. The light emanating from his entire body was simply too brilliant, forcing others to narrow their eyes.

A powerful aura emanated forth from the dazzling ‘sun’.

Linley took a close look. Only then was he able to tell that there was a human figure within the ‘sun’. This person had long golden hair, golden eyebrows, and a pure white face that was devoid of any hair, aside from the golden eyebrows that drooped down past his ears. A loose golden robe embroidered with gold covered his entire body, but it only enhanced his powerful physique.

The eyes of the man seemed like two miniature suns. They were eye-piercingly brilliant, and made others feel as though they couldn’t stare directly at this man.

“A Sovereign?” Linley instantly came to this conclusion. “Light-type aura. It seems this is a Sovereign of Light. Why has a Sovereign of Light come?” Linley didn’t understand.

“Greetings, Sovereign.” Linley bowed and said.

“Greetings, Sovereign.” Bebe immediately bowed as well.

The Chief Sovereign of Light gave an emotionless downwards glance to Linley and Bebe. His gaze was calm, like that of an emperor staring down at lesser creatures. After some time, the Chief Sovereign of Light finally spoke. “Are you Linley?”

“Yes.” Linley looked very respectful, but his heart was filled with confused thoughts.

Why had this Sovereign come? Could it have been for the Overgod talisman? Or was it for the sake of Chegwin? When faced with this situation, Linley instantly began to think of many possible responses. Although he came up with quite a few, Linley still felt nervous and uneasy. After all, with the Sovereign here in person, if the Sovereign wanted him dead, he only had to wave his hand.

After he had arrived, the Chief Sovereign of Light had set up his Godrealm, making it so that Linley and Bebe were placed in a region separated from the outside world. Nobody in the outside world could see what happened here.

“This is...a Sovereign?”

The Lord Prefect, ‘Beirut’, turned to look towards the air above Linley and Bebe. His face couldn’t help but change. “Why did a Sovereign of Light come to my place?” Beirut hesitated slightly, then gritted his teeth and flew at high speed towards Linley and Bebe. He feared Sovereigns of Light, but he cared deeply about Linley and Bebe. He couldn’t just stay uninvolved!

Linley was currently speaking with the Chief Sovereign of Light, who hovered there in the air.

“This did indeed happen! Because of what had happened, many of the Sovereigns of the Infernal Realm paid attention to this matter, but clearly, this information was falsely made. I have no nine soul pearls, nor do I have an Overgod decree.” Linley raised his head and looked at the Chief Sovereign of Light as he spoke calmly.

The Chief Sovereign of Light’s glowing gaze expanded, making it so that Linley couldn’t help but feel his eyes hurt as he stared upwards.

“Linley, I give you one chance. Hand over the nine soul pearls. Otherwise, die!” The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly.

Linley felt shocked. “Why is the Chief Sovereign of Light so certain that I hold the nine soul pearls? No; only Bebe, Olivier’s family, and Molde knows this for sure. Molde died long ago, and Olivier has returned to the Yulan continent. There shouldn’t be any problems.”

“Sovereign, I truly don’t understand.” Linley raised his head, pretending to speak in anger. “Last time, the Sovereign of Wind also questioned me in this manner, but the results were clear; that news was fake. Most likely, there might not even be an Overgod mission. Why, Sovereign, must you insist that I have the nine soul pearls?”

Right at this moment, a violent ripple emanated from the surrounding area. Someone was passing through the Sovereign’s Godrealm, entering within.

“Hrm?” The Chief Sovereign of Light turned to look.

“Whoosh!” A figure flew in at high speed. When Linley looked closely, he saw that it was Beirut!

“Grandpa.” Bebe was overjoyed.

The Chief Sovereign of Light looked down at the figure before him. Upon seeing Beirut, his face couldn’t help but sink. With a cold snort, he said, “Beirut. You actually dare come see me?”

Beirut, hearing this voice, couldn’t help but feel startled. Upon raising his head, his face changed and he called out in shock, “Chief Sovereign of Light!”

“Chief Sovereign of Light?” Linley was secretly startled.

Based on the information Linley had available, there were eleven Chief Sovereigns, with the four Chief Sovereigns of the four Edicts being the most powerful. Second only to those four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts was this Chief Sovereign of Light!

“Chief Sovereign of Light, why have you come to my place?” Beirut said in a low voice.

“Why?” The Chief Sovereign of Light’s gaze turned very cold when he looked at Beirut. “This friend of yours, ‘Linley’, claims that he does not have the nine soul pearls, and that the information regarding the Overgod mission is false as well. Unfortunately...I now know very well that your friend is lying!”

Beirut stood next to Linley.

“Lying?” Linley said solemnly. “Chief Sovereign, even though you have the exalted status of Chief Sovereign, you can’t just casually besmirch my reputation.”

“Besmirch?”

The Chief Sovereign of Light waved his hand, and a green piece of paper appeared within it. Afterwards, the Chief Sovereign of Light used divine power, causing rays of power to shoot out from that green paper which then formed into lines of words and pictures which hung there in midair. It was a power akin to a ‘screamer recording’; this was just a simple usage of power.

Linley, Bebe, and Beirut all looked at the words and images in midair.

“Overgod decree?” Beirut was stunned.

“That...that’s the Overgod decree?” Linley was startled.

The words described the Overgod mission very carefully, and the contents of it were identical to the contents of the paper which Molde had sent out.

“Linley, I acquired this Overgod decree, which is proof that the information is true. It seems that information wasn’t just wildly made up. As I see it, you had best no longer dissemble. Just hand it over.” The Chief Sovereign of Light looked down at the three of them and spoke in a cold voice.

“Boss, that’s the Overgod decree. This is going to be trouble.” Bebe said hurriedly.

Linley just raised his head and said, “Chief Sovereign, I congratulate you very sincerely for acquiring the Overgod decree! It seems the Overgod mission is a real one. But I must say...just because the Overgod mission is real, does that have to mean that the nine soul pearls and the Overgod decree are all truly in my hands? But clearly, the Overgod decree is in your hands, Chief Sovereign.”

“Stop lying. I have no interest in hearing your lies. Will you or won’t you hand it over? If you don’t, then don’t blame me for acting.” The Chief Sovereign of Light gave his final warning.

“Mr. Augusta.” A voice rang out.

The Chief Sovereign of Light swept his gaze across. Within his Godrealm, a figure slowly began to materialize. This man had long, blood-red hair, and was dressed in a blood-colored robe. Linley, seeing this, felt secretly delighted. “The Bloodridge Sovereign!”

“Boson?” The Chief Sovereign of Light frowned.

“Mr. Augusta.” The Bloodridge Sovereign smiled. “I already heard the news. Everything was caused by false information. But not long ago, it was already determined that the Overgod mission wasn’t necessarily real, and that the news that Linley was in possession of the nine soul pearls was also false.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light gave him a cold glance, then waved his hand and made the green paper face the Bloodridge Sovereign.

The Bloodridge Sovereign gave it a glance, seeing the words on it. He couldn't help but feel shocked. "This is the Overgod decree?"

"Is it still false? Clearly, the information is real. I imagine that this sort of news wouldn't be randomly made up. Linley definitely has the nine soul pearls." The Chief Sovereign of Light stared coldly towards Linley. "Linley, I've already told you that you have only two choices. Hand it over or die. You decide."

The Chief Sovereign of Light completely ignored the Bloodridge Sovereign's presence!

"Chief Sovereign."

Linley raised his head and said, "I told you that I don't have the nine soul pearls, yet you refuse to believe me. And so you will kill me? But I have to tell you something; I have other divine clones in other places. Even if you kill me, you won't be able to open my interspatial ring. Thus, even if I have the nine soul pearls and you kill me, you still won't be able to acquire it. What's more, I don't have them!"

"Divine clones?" The Chief Sovereign of Light frowned. "Where?"

"A material plane." Linley said honestly.

"My Yulan Plane." Beirut smiled.

"Hmph." The Chief Sovereign of Light gave Beirut a cold glance.

"Excellent. You actually hid your divine clones in a material plane. You are quite clever." The Chief Sovereign of Light said coldly. "You claim that you don't have the nine soul pearls. Remove the binding you have over your interspatial ring and let me investigate it. Do you dare?"

"If you search it and don't find it, will you leave, Chief Sovereign?" Linley asked.

"Don't waste my time." The Chief Sovereign of Light's face sank.

"Fine. Since you, Chief Sovereign of Light, insist on searching my interspatial ring just based on your suspicions...then I, Linley, will today let you inspect it." With but a thought, Linley divided his body into two, simultaneously retrieving two interspatial rings. After removing the bindings, Linley raised his head to look at the Chief Sovereign, then laughed calmly, "I imagine, Chief Sovereign, you know that I currently only have these two divine clones present. You can go ahead and investigate these interspatial rings."

Linley then tossed them towards the air, towards the Chief Sovereign of Light.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 32, I'd Rather Die! A Change of Events

Linley had so straightforwardly handed over his interspatial rings that the Chief Sovereign of Light was rather suspicious. "Can it be that it truly is as I suspected; Linley had taken the nine soul pearls back to the Yulan Plane?" When he had heard Linley say that Linley's divine clones were not present and had returned to the Yulan Plane, the Chief Sovereign of Light had a bad feeling.

But the Chief Sovereign of Light still bound the rings with blood and inspected them both. "There really is nothing here!"

"Chief Sovereign, are the nine soul pearls that you seek within?" Linley said in a clear voice, his head raised.

"Hmph."

After removing his binding, the Chief Sovereign of Light casually tossed the two interspatial rings to Linley. Right at this moment, energy once more began to tremble and swirl about in the surrounding area as a blurry figure appeared, then solidified. Clearly, yet another Sovereign had created an energy clone.

The Sovereigns of the Infernal Realm were scattered everywhere. For them to arrive in a short period of time was unlikely. Still, given that their divine sense covered the entire region, the Sovereigns could form energy clones at any time.

"Augusta." The newcomer was dressed in a long, silver robe. He stared at Augusta with his violet eyes.

"Shinji." The Chief Sovereign of Light glanced at him.

Upon seeing this person, Linley felt his heart rise. "The Starmist Sovereign!" Linley had seen this person before; this was the Sovereign who controlled the Infernal Realm's Starmist Sea.

"What a lively place this is. Even you came, Augusta. Shinji, Boson!" A warm voice rang out as a blurry violet energy began to solidify then transform into a human figure. It was a beautiful woman dressed in loose, faint violet robes. A familiar aura emanating from her caused Linley to have a thought.

"This aura seems so similar to Reisgem's." Linley mused to himself.

"Linley, long time no see. After you left the Amethyst Mountains, a mere few thousand years passed, but you've had such accomplishments." The beautiful woman smiled as she looked at Linley. Her eyes seemed to contain some sort of astonishing charisma that could move a person's soul.

"Sovereign." This time, when Linley bowed, it was with true sincerity and true respect. The Redbud Sovereign had indeed helped him greatly.

"Haha...there really are quite a few people here. Are all of you here for the Overgod mission?" A clear voice rang out, and fiery energy solidified in the air, then condensed into a slightly pump man. His fiery red hair was casually mussed, and fire could be seen faintly flickering and swirling around him. In the center of his forehead, there was the seal of a golden flame.

"Oh, so many have arrived already." A black energy condensed.

One Sovereign energy clone after another appeared in midair. Linley could only recognize just three or four of them; he didn't recognize the vast majority of them.

"So many Sovereigns." Beirut had a hint of a smile on his face as he sent to Linley, "Linley, for so many Sovereigns to simultaneously appear is something which might not be seen in a trillion years."

"There are indeed many Sovereigns here." Linley swept them with his gaze. In the air above him, more than fifteen Sovereigns had appeared!

Logically speaking, there should only be seven Destruction-type Sovereigns in the Infernal Realm, but fifteen had appeared. A Sovereign of Fire. Of Water. Of Light. Of Earth...indeed, it was quite lively. With the majestic presences of so many Sovereigns present, even Linley felt some pressure.

"I feel miserable." Bebe sent to Linley.

"Try and endure it." Linley himself could do nothing.

The Sovereigns began to chat amongst themselves.

"Mr. Augusta, you have the Overgod decree?" The Sovereign with the golden flame seal on his forehead said hurriedly. The various Sovereigns were all staring at the Chief Sovereign of Light.

The Chief Sovereign of Light let out a calm laugh. He didn't try to hide it. Waving his hand, that green paper appeared, hovering above his palm. "This is the Overgod talisman. There's no need to hide the information within." The Chief Sovereign of Light forthrightly allowed all of the Sovereigns to view the green paper. "Clearly, the news that spread in the Infernal Realm in the past was real!"

The group of Sovereigns hovered there in midair, chatting amongst themselves.

An Overgod mission! Although some Sovereigns didn't dare dream of completing it, others wanted to give it a try! Even if the ones who didn't dare make an attempt still cared greatly about this matter. After becoming Sovereigns, they no longer had many pursuits. Overgod missions were ones they cared about greatly.

"Chief Sovereign, you've already inspected my interspatial ring. Now, Chief Sovereign, do you still doubt my words?" Linley said clearly.

"Inspected? Hmph. Only two of your divine clones are present. Others remain hiding in the Yulan Plane. If you aren't afraid of Sovereigns inspecting you, why have your divine clones hide there?" The Chief Sovereign of Light clearly wasn't going to let Linley off that easily.

"Linley's divine clones went to the Yulan Plane?" Quite a few Sovereigns immediately called out in surprise.

"Perhaps the information in the Overgod decree really is true. Then Linley might truly be holding the nine soul pearls." This was what some Sovereigns began to believe.

Linley looked at the group of Sovereigns in the air above him, then turned his gaze to the Chief Sovereign of Light. "Chief Sovereign, the Yulan Plane is my homeland. What's the problem with me returning to my homeland? Can it be that after I successfully became a Paragon, I can't even go home?"

"You can. Of course you can." The Chief Sovereign of Light said coldly. "Then would you dare have your other divine clones emerge from the Yulan Plane and come to the Infernal Realm?" As the Chief Sovereign of Light viewed it, there was no way Linley would let someone else carry a treasure like an Overgod talisman. Nine out of ten, Linley carried it on one of his interspatial rings.

Linley stared at the Chief Sovereign of Light, then shook his head. "I will not."

Hearing Linley's words, the Chief Sovereign of Light couldn't help but laugh coldly. "Oh. It seems that the nine soul pearls truly are on your other divine clones."

"Linley doesn't dare let his divine clones return to the Infernal Realm? It seems there really is something amiss."

That group of lofty Sovereigns watched and laughed calmly as this unfolded. They couldn't be bothered to interfere. As for the Bloodridge Sovereign and the Redbud Sovereign, they just watched silently, not saying a word.

"Chief Sovereign." Linley laughed calmly. "You are an exalted Chief Sovereign, but just on the basis of a manufactured rumor, you were ready to attack me. Indeed, the Overgod mission might be real. But the information claimed that the 'nine soul pearls' and the 'Overgod decree' were on me, whereas now, the Overgod decree is in your hands, Chief Sovereign!"

The group of Sovereigns turned to look at the Chief Sovereign of Light, as though they were watching a diverting play.

"The Overgod decree is useless to you. It's understandable for you to toss it aside." The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly. "Linley, you will not bring your divine clones here. Otherwise..."

"Otherwise what?" Beirut spoke out. Beirut raised his head to look at the Chief Sovereign of Light. "Almighty Chief Sovereign, what, are you planning to threaten a Deity?"

The Chief Sovereign of Light lowered his head, giving Beirut an icy look. Beirut continued to smile.

"Linley, bring your divine clones over and allow me to inspect them." The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly. "After inspecting, I naturally won't act against you." Given how many Sovereigns were watching, for now, the Chief Sovereign of Light didn't want to shed all pretense of cordiality and attack a Highgod Paragon.

"Chief Sovereign." Linley raised his head, staring coldly at the Chief Sovereign. "It isn't that I don't believe you; only, your words make me unable to believe you. Just now, you threatened me; how could I possibly dare bring my divine clones out? If I bring all of my divine clones but end up being killed by you, I, Linley, wouldn't even have the chance to curse at you."

The Chief Sovereign of Light's face sank as he heard this.

"There is no way I will bring my divine clones out from the Infernal Realm. However, my divine clones definitely are not in possession of the nine soul pearls." Linley said clearly. "I, Linley, can swear it! Overgod of Fate, if the divine clones of myself, Linley, which are currently in the Yulan Plane are in possession of the nine soul pearls, then let my soul be dissipated and let me die!"

Linley stared at the Chief Sovereign of Light.

"Hrm?" The Chief Sovereign of Light frowned slightly.

The surrounding Sovereigns either secretly chatted through divine sense or began to chat openly.

"Can it be that he truly doesn't have it?" The Chief Sovereign of Light was puzzled.

"Can it be that it is on Linley's friends or family?" The Chief Sovereign of Light mused. He couldn't help but glance at Bebe, by Linley's side. He barked, "Linley, perhaps the nine soul pearls are not on you, but you probably hid them on your friends. Such as the person next to you."

The look on Linley's face became ugly.

“Chief Sovereign, if you want to investigate, then investigate.” Linley looked towards Bebe. “Bebe, give your interspatial ring to the Chief Sovereign of Light.”

“Yes. Boss.” Bebe didn’t hesitate.

Seeing how straightforward Linley was, the Chief Sovereign of Light just said icily, “No need to continue with this game of charades. I know that neither he nor you are holding it. If he did, he would probably be in the Yulan Plane as well! Linley, as I see it, those nine soul pearls must be in the Yulan Plane. Either on your divine clones, or on your family members.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light had no idea that those two talismans were right on Bebe!

“Chief Sovereign, you wanted to search me, so I let you search! You suspected my divine clones, so I swore an oath by the Overgods! You suspected my brother, so I let him give you his interspatial ring to search! And now, you suspect my family and friends! I imagine that even if I brought my family and friends before you for you to search, after you were unable to find it, you would probably say that I had hidden the interspatial ring in some location within my homeland, the Yulan continent.” Linley said in a low voice.

The Chief Sovereign of Light was startled.

“For the sake of avoiding all suspicion and trouble, why don’t we just be more straightforward about it. Chief Sovereign, go ahead and send a group of Highgods to my homeland, the Yulan continent, and search for it.” An ugly look was on Linley’s face. “I guarantee that my family, friends, and divine clones will make themselves available for your forces to search. You can even let your people search the entire Yulan continent. I have no qualms about this.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light glanced at the nearby Beirut.

Go to the Yulan Plane?

As a Sovereign, he was unable to enter the Yulan Plane. If he sent a group of Highgods, wouldn’t they have to obediently follow Beirut’s rules?

“Augusta, considering how far Linley is willing to go...forget it. That part of the information regarding the Overgod mission was real, but the other parts were probably false.” The Redbud Sovereign laughed as she spoke.

The Chief Sovereign of Light stared coldly at Linley.

In his heart, he was pondering, “Linley’s words...on the surface, he is asking me to go search, but if I send people there, they will be in Beirut’s sphere of power. How will they search? He’s just putting on an act and saying these things. He definitely wouldn’t entrust the nine soul pearls to an ordinary person. It seems the nine soul pearls are on Linley’s family or friends.” The Chief Sovereign of Light came to this conclusion.

“Linley!”

The Chief Sovereign of Light stared down coldly at Linley. “Don’t play these tricks with me. Have all of your family, friends, and divine clones come to the Infernal Realm. I, Augusta, swear that I will not kill you. But if you refuse...then you will die!”

He was going too far!

The Chief Sovereign of Light really was going too far by threatening Linley repeatedly. Quite a few of the surrounding Sovereigns all felt this way, but these Sovereigns weren’t willing to casually offend the Chief Sovereign of Light, and so they just watched.

“Chief Sovereign, if I let my family and friends come over while my divine clones remain behind, is that acceptable?” Linley laughed coldly.

“Of course not.” The Chief Sovereign of Light didn’t hesitate at all.

As he saw it, if Linley’s family and friends came, most likely the nine soul pearls would be given to Linley’s divine clones.

“Haha...”

Below, Linley began to laugh from ‘rage’. “Chief Sovereign and all of the surrounding Sovereigns, my actions have been clear for you all to see. I have, time and time again, held back and allowed this Chief Sovereign to search me. I’ve even sworn an oath by the Overgods and am even willing to let my family and friends come to the Infernal Realm. But you?”

“Your intentions are clear. You insist on all of my divine clones coming out!”

Linley’s rage was beginning to tower. “If I brought all of my divine clones here to see you, then wouldn’t my life and death no longer be under my own control? Most likely, by then, you’d kill me if you felt like it! I, Linley, am not that stupid. I, Linley, have already been sufficiently respectful to you today. Everything I’ve done, all of these Sovereigns have witnessed. If you want to continue threatening me, what more can I do? All I can do is tell you this; I’m not able to comply!”

“If, by relying on your power as a Sovereign, you kill me, I’m not able to fight back. Attack when you please.” Linley stared coldly at the Chief Sovereign of Light. “In my heart, Sovereigns are lofty, exalted figures. I deeply respect and venerate Sovereigns, but Chief Sovereign, I just want to say one thing to you...don’t make me look down on you!”

When Linley’s words came out, the Chief Sovereign of Light’s face turned black.

Linley just raised his head, staring at the Chief Sovereign of Light, not willing to lower his head at all.

Linley knew that the more he gave way, the more the Chief Sovereign of Light would advance and pressure him. To Linley...although handing over the nine soul pearls could save his life, he couldn’t hand them over! That was his hope of bringing Grandpa Doehring back to life! Even if he died, it would just be the death of his original body and a divine clone.

Could it be that Grandpa Doehring’s life was less valuable than one of his divine clones and his original body?

In the past, if it wasn’t for Grandpa Doehring, Linley probably would have been an ordinary warrior in the Yulan continent who wouldn’t even have the chance to take revenge. If it hadn’t been for Grandpa Doehring sacrificing his life, Linley probably would’ve been killed by the forces of the Radiant Church!

He would rather die! Die, rather than hand it over!

“Excellent. Excellent!” The Chief Sovereign of Light was so furious, he truly did want to kill Linley now.

But Linley’s final words, “don’t make me look down on you,” truly made it so that the Chief Sovereign of Light wanted to act, but couldn’t. So many other Sovereigns were watching him. If he were to truly kill Linley, then he probably really would lose all face amongst Sovereigns.

“I don’t understand.” Bebe, by Linley’s side, mumbled through pursed lips. “Thirty some years ago, a Highgod named ‘Brodie’ who had fused with a divine spark appeared in the Muja Continent. Back then, he acquired a red caltrop diamond, and by relying on it, was able to easily kill Six Star Fiends. Back then, we were all certain that was a true treasure, but we weren’t able to verify if it was an Overgod talisman. Sadly,

Brodie himself probably fled through a teleportation array and left the Infernal Realm. Alas. Rather than go search for an Overgod talisman that actually appeared, you've come to find Linley, who does not have the nine soul pearls, and insist that he does. I really don't understand!"

"Brodie? Red caltrop diamond?"

Instantly, the group of Sovereigns began to speak out.

"The red caltrop diamond truly did appear?" Quite a few Sovereigns looked towards Bebe.

"Of course!" Bebe was completely certain. "That Brodie used one of his Highgod clones to tie down a group of people. I imagine that when he left the Infernal Realm, he only took his God-level divine clone and his wife, who was merely a Demigod." Bebe said with certainty.

"Muja, quickly go investigate."

The Sovereigns all looked towards the Muja Sovereign. The Muja Sovereign's energy clone was present, but his original body was in the distant Muja Continent. The Muja Sovereign immediately began to investigate this matter.

Enough regarding those other Sovereigns, though; the Chief Sovereign of Light now truly felt a hint of a killing urge towards Linley. Unfortunately, with so many other Sovereigns present, he didn't attack.

Suddenly...

"Augusta, why have you come to the Infernal Realm?" A deep, rumbling voice echoed forth.

At the same time, a pure black color appeared in midair and a terrifying aura swept out. It was like an enormous, world-ending behemoth had appeared...but it then condensed into a human figure. This was a figure swathed completely in black light, with an aura so strong that it even suppressed the Chief Sovereign of Light's.

"Chief Sovereign!"

"Chief Sovereign!"

The other Sovereigns all immediately saluted. Clearly, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had tremendous prestige.

Linley was shocked. "This aura of Destruction...Chief Sovereign? The Chief Sovereign of Destruction? One of the Chief Sovereigns of the four Edicts, a figure of legend?" Linley understood that given how powerful this aura was, clearly the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had come in person. If he had wanted to send his energy clone, he probably would've arrived long ago.

Linley looked carefully at the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, but no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't see the person in the black light clearly.

"You came as well. Can it be that you are also interested in the Overgod talisman?" The Chief Sovereign of Light looked at him.

"Do you still remember the agreement we made ten thousand years ago?" The Chief Sovereign of Destruction said calmly.

"Of course I do." The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly.

“Very good. This Linley is my Emissary. Even if you want to pressure him, don’t go too far.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction said calmly. These words caused this group of Sovereigns to all look towards the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. Even the Redbud Sovereign and the Bloodridge Sovereign revealed traces of astonishment in their eyes. Even they didn’t know about this.

“His Emissary?” Linley’s heart shook.

“Yours?” The Chief Sovereign of Light looked at the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, then laughed calmly and nodded. “Fine, then. This matter ends here.”

But right at this moment, the brown-haired Muja Sovereign laughed loudly. “Chief Sovereign, Mr. Augusta...everyone, I just did a high-speed search, and I really did discover that thirty eight years ago, a God and a Demigod, male and female, used the teleportation array to go to a material plane. It is very rare for a God and a Demigod to use a teleportation array; during the past thirty years, there was only this one instance.”

“Which material plane did they go to?” The Sovereign of Wind, ‘Teresia’, spoke out.

At the same time, many Sovereigns looked towards the Muja Sovereign, including the Chief Sovereign of Light! As for the Chief Sovereign of Destruction...Linley couldn’t even see his true appearance clearly, much less where he was looking towards.

Linley’s heart began to tremble. “A material plane?”

He finally knew where Brodie had gone to! There was hope for him to find the red caltrop diamond!

“Haha, I’m not too interested in the Overgod talismans, so I’ll tell you. The material plane this couple went to is the material plane known as the ‘Okerlund’ [Ao’ka’lun] Plane!” The Muja Sovereign said clearly.

Immediately, the Sovereigns began to chat amongst themselves.

“Everyone, I’m going back now.” A low voice rang out. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s figure turned, then disappeared from sight.

With the departure of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, the other Sovereigns immediately all began to depart as well.

Clearly...this precise information regarding the red caltrop diamond had caused the Sovereigns to all grow excited.

“Linley, are you going to go to the Okerlund Plane?” The Chief Sovereign of Light looked down at Linley.

“Of course.” Linley said solemnly.

The Chief Sovereign of Light let out a cold laugh, then disappeared.

Moments later, the other Sovereigns left as well, not a single one remaining.

“Linley?” Beirut laughed as he looked at Linley. “Are you really going to the Okerlund Plane?”

“Yes, I am going. And...I’m going right now!” Linley said.

After learning the location was the Okerlund Plane, Linley already felt completely confident! Sovereigns weren’t able to enter material planes. Then...who had he to fear? Even if the other Paragons came at the orders of the Sovereigns, now that Linley had fused four types of divine power, his strength was ten times what it was in the past!

In fact, the durability of his body was probably close to a Sovereign artifact by now.

“The red caltrop diamond is mine.” Linley’s heart blazed with eagerness.

After having embarked on the road to acquire the red caltrop diamond, Linley had already decided that he would sacrifice anything. If Deities came to stop him, he would slaughter them! Paragons, divine beasts...even those with the backing of Sovereigns...if they wanted to stop him, he would show no mercy!

For the sake of Grandpa Doehring...

Linley had already decided to ‘shatter his cauldrons and sink his boats’; he would sacrifice everything. There was no going back!

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 33,

Descent

The Divine Light Plane. Deep within the vast, endless Godsgaol Sea, there was a quiet little island...Jadeflower Island.

This island had a circumference of only a few dozen kilometers, but over the course of countless years, the surrounding pirates had all come to a common understanding...no matter what, they were not to draw close to that little island! For countless years, anyone who dared to disturb the peace of Jadeflower Island, aside from old friends of the island master, would all perish.

“Rumble...”

In the air above Jadeflower Island, a wind arose and clouds gathered. A surge of powerful energy coalesced above it, and tens of figures immediately flew out of the island. The leader was a man, while the others were all female. The leading male was dressed in a white robe, had unbound golden hair, and two whiskers that drooped downwards like a pair of eyebrows. His gaze, however, was fathomlessly deep and cold.

The energy in the skies above solidified into a figure; it was the Chief Sovereign of Light!

“Greetings, Chief Sovereign.” The white-robed, golden-haired man bowed slightly.

“Chief Sovereign.” The women also knelt down as well.

The Chief Sovereign of Light permitted a smile to appear on his face, then walked towards the white-robed man. “Clementine [Ke’lai’men’ting], I’ve come today because there is something important I wish to ask you to go do.”

The white-robed man lifted a surprised eyebrow. “Chief Sovereign, if there is something which you cannot accomplish, how can I, a Highgod, accomplish it?”

“Listen to me first.” The Chief Sovereign of Light smiled. In his heart, though, the Chief Sovereign of Light was rather unhappy. “These Highgod Paragons are all so arrogant. The vast majority of them are unwilling to become Emissaries, and even if they do, they won’t easily be persuaded to go on missions. Linley was so arrogant. This Clementine, despite being my Emissary, is not easily sent on missions either!”

Highgod Paragons were still supreme amongst Deities.

Many of them, in the bottom of their hearts, felt quite dissatisfied towards Sovereigns; what was so amazing about Sovereigns? They were just lucky enough to acquire Sovereign sparks!

Thus, Paragons rarely listened to or obeyed Sovereigns. When Linley had faced the Chief Sovereign of Light’s repeated threats, then finally been enraged and started to snap back, none of the surrounding Sovereigns were surprised...after all, Linley was a Paragon. If he continuously shrank back without fighting back at all, others would look down on him.

The Chief Sovereign of Light began to carefully describe the Overgod talisman matter to this Clementine.

“You now have a clear understanding of what happened here.” The Chief Sovereign of Light smiled. “Now, the red caltrop diamond is probably at the Okerlund material plane. We foreign Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes. Thus, the struggle over the red caltrop diamond in the Okerlund material plane will be

up to you Deities! Amongst Deities, Highgod Paragons will naturally...well, you should understand now, yes?"

"Understood."

Clementine nodded...but he didn't volunteer himself.

The Chief Sovereign of Light mentally snorted, but he kept a smile on his face. "If you complete the mission, this will be a great accomplishment. There is no way for me to give you another Sovereign artifact, but I can give you ten thousand drops of Sovereign's Might..." Clementine's facial expression didn't change. Clearly, he didn't lack for Sovereign's Might.

But there was no way for the Chief Sovereign of Light to give him another Sovereign artifact.

"I can give you the ten thousand drops of light-type Sovereign's Might right now. If you fail, then forget it. If you succeed in acquiring the red caltrop diamond, when you hand it over to me, then I will give you another ten thousand drops of Sovereign's Might of another type. What say you?" The Chief Sovereign of Light smiled.

"Don't worry, Chief Sovereign. I will definitely work whole-heartedly to acquire the red caltrop diamond." Clementine bowed forward slightly.

"Mm." Only now did the Chief Sovereign of Light laughed, satisfied. "Go to the Okerlund material plane. If you don't have enough subordinates, go to the teleportation array and summon a thousand Highgods to follow you."

"Yes!" Clementine said respectfully. "Then I shall immediately head out."

Sovereigns, being outsiders, were unable to enter material planes. Although many Sovereigns were intrigued, they could only go ask the various Highgod Paragons to lead their forces to the Okerlund Plane. Battles in material planes relied on Deities! Sovereigns could only wait outside for news.

The Okerlund Plane. The size of this entire plane was comparable to the Yulan Plane.

However, 99% of the surface of the Yulan Plane was covered by water! The South Sea, in particular, took up a region that was a thousand or ten thousand times larger than the Yulan continent! But the Okerlund Plane was different. A large majority of the Okerlund Plane was covered by land!

The Okerlund Plane consisted of two vast continents.

They were the Fogdeep continent and the Beastgod continent! These two large continents both had a circumference greater than a hundred million kilometers. Aside from these two continents, there was only the endless sea.

The Okerlund Plane's Fogdeep continent was governed by humans, while the Beastgod continent was ruled over by beastmen.

Within the Fogdeep continent. There was a terrifying forest that covered an area of more than ten million kilometers...Fogdeep Forest!

Fogdeep Forest had existed for countless years. Its age was completely unfathomable, and it was simply too vast, causing many who adventured deep within it to be unable to pass to the other side despite spending their entire lives attempting to do so. According to legend, within Fogdeep Forest, aside from many magical beasts, there were also many primordial races, such as elves, sprites, dwarves, mountain giants, and others.

Deep within Fogdeep Forest. Mount Wiesel [Wei'si'er] was the number one mountain of the Fogdeep Forest, and was more than a hundred thousand kilometers tall.

Mount Wiesel's peak had eleven enormous teleportation arrays. Aside from these teleportation arrays, there was also an ordinary boulder which had been shaped into an estate. The Planar Overseer of the Okerlund Plane lived here.

"Nine hundred more years before this assignment to oversee the Okerlund Plane ends." A tall, thin, two-horned man stood at the peak of the mountain, staring at the vast, endlessly Fogdeep Forest. He could easily see that far in the distance, there were two enormous magical beasts that were bellowing at and fighting each other.

Boulders shattered. Trees trembled, then split apart. The two powerful magical beasts seemed to have gone berserk.

An Azure Steelwing Hawk was currently perched quietly atop an ancient tree that had lived for ten thousand years, stealthily watching the distant battle. It seemed to be waiting for an opportunity to strike after both of these magical beasts were injured.

"It's been only three years. I didn't imagine that this kid actually completed fusing with the magicite core of the eighth rank magical beast, 'Azure Steelwing Hawk'. It seems that he has become a druid of the eighth rank and should become a supreme expert amongst the younger generation within his tribe." The tall, skinny man smiled as he watched.

Out of boredom, the Planar Overseer had grown to be quite familiar with the eight elven tribes surrounding the area.

There were some elves who were capable of becoming druids.

Even for Deities, druids were considered seem as rather unique. After fusing with a magicite core, they were actually able to transform into magical beasts. Even Deities would find it hard to find any differences between druids and ordinary magical beasts. This was because...after transforming, druids would become a true magical beast!

This Planar Overseer had become familiar with the soul aura of this elven genius, which was why upon seeing the Azure Steelwind Hawk, he knew it was the elven youth who had transformed.

"I wonder if this youth will become a Deity during my tenure as Planar Overseer, then head to the Higher Planes." The tall, skinny man mused to himself.

Right at this moment, one of the eleven teleportation arrays suddenly lit up.

"Eh?" The tall, skinny man turned to look. "From the Divine Fire Plane!"

These eleven teleportation arrays were aligned to the four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Planes.

"To travel from the Divine Fire Plane to a material plane...the cost is astronomical. A few dozen years ago, that couple returned from the Infernal Realm. Now, someone else comes from the Divine Fire Plane." The tall, skinny man immediately walked towards the teleportation array, and the brilliant, illusory glow of the teleportation array slowly faded.

The tall, skinny man's face changed.

He saw a large, dense cluster of people within the teleportation array, with the leader being a grim-looking man who wore a long azure robe and whose long, fiery red hair fell to his shoulders.

“So many people. There are more than a hundred! And these people’s power...I can’t see through any of them.” The tall, skinny man was badly shocked. He was a God. For him to be unable to see through them...meant that all of these hundred-plus people were Highgods!

“For a single Highgod to pass through to a material plane has an astronomical cost. For so many Highgods...” The tall, skinny man took a long, deep breath. Whether they had come after paying an astronomical fee or had come for free through a Sovereign, they were not people who he, a lowly Planar Overseer, could be compared to.

“Milord.” The tall, skinny man hurriedly bowed.

The fiery haired man’s gaze was like thunder. The Planar Overseer just barely looked at him before immediately feeling as though his soul had been struck by a heavy hammer.

The fiery haired man couldn’t be bothered with this God. The hundred Highgods under his command immediately spread out, and the teleportation array once more lit up!

“Someone else from the Divine Fire Plane?” The tall, skinny man was shocked.

Indeed...yet another group of more than a hundred had come!

Because each teleportation array was limited in size, only a hundred could come each time. Even if they squeezed, two hundred was pretty much the limit. But clearly, many people were coming from the Divine Fire Plane! One batch after another...the teleportation array lit up time and time again as more people were sent over...

“How many are there?!” The tall, skinny man was stunned.

Why had so many Highgods come to the Okerlund Plane? What were they here for?

A long time later, the teleportation array finally halted. More than two thousand Highgods had come from the Divine Fire Plane! Although, to the Divine Fire Plane, two thousand Highgods wasn’t much, to an ordinary material plane, two thousand Highgods was simply, incredibly terrifying.

“There are too many people in this material plane. However...aside from the Planar Overseer, there are only two Gods, and one is female, while the other is a beastman-shaped male.” The fiery haired man let out a cold snort.

The tall, skinny man was shocked upon hearing this.

He knew who the two people the fiery haired man mentioned were. One was the number one expert of the Fogdeep continent, the ‘Radiant Goddess’, while the other was the ‘Beastgod’ of the Beastgod continent. But these two continents were extremely far from each other. Even Highgods, in a material plane, were only able to stretch their divine sense to a million kilometers or so. It would be very hard to cover even just the Fogdeep continent.

To be able to stretch and scan the two continents at the same time...what sort of spiritual energy was this?!

“It seems that Brodie has indeed hidden himself quite deeply.” The fiery haired man glanced at the tall, skinny man. “What are you called?”

“Milord, my name is Ben [Bi’en]. Okerlund Plane’s Planar Overseer.” The tall, skinny man said respectfully.

“Planar Overseer...then you definitely know about Brodie’s arrival.” The fiery haired man suddenly frowned. Yet another teleportation array had begun to shine.

“They are quite fast.”

The fiery haired man immediately gave an order through divine sense to the surrounding Highgods. “Head out!” At the same time, he released a hint of fiery red energy, grabbing the Planar Overseer with it and taking him away as he flew. The two thousand Highgods behind him also followed as they flew away at high speed.

Just as they flew away, another group of Highgods descended. From the teleportation array, it seemed they came from the Infernal Realm.

It was another group of over a hundred Highgods, with the leader being a youth with dark, wavy black hair and a dark black robe. His cold pupils were like the pupils of a venomous viper. If Linley was here, he would immediately recognize...that this grim-looking man in the black robe was that person who had helped Linley once. Dunnington!

“Hmph. I didn’t expect that someone would be even faster than us.” Dunnington swept his gaze into the distance. “Indeed, a Paragon is leading that group.”

The teleportation array once more lit up as one group after another emerged.

Dunnington didn’t lead that many people here, just eight hundred Highgods or so. In reality, though, the fight over the red caltrop diamond would depend on the Highgod Paragons.

“Let’s go.” Dunnington gave the order, and this vast, awe-inspiring group flew out as well.

The armies of the various Divine Planes and Higher Planes, with Paragons at the lead of almost all of them, began to descend! The light of the teleportation arrays flashed nonstop!

The beastmen, elves, gnomes, and other races of Fogdeep Forest, upon seeing these thousands of people fly past high in the sky, were all scared silly.

“So many Saints! More than a thousand Saints. Which power is this? Who possesses such terrifying strength?” Quite a few people who saw this scene believed these people to be Saints. Only the Saints and Deities of the Okerlund Plane knew...to their terror and shock...

That they couldn’t sense the strength level of any of the individuals flying within the vast hordes that filled the skies!

The Okerlund Plane’s experts all knew in their hearts...

“The gods have descended!”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 34, Hiding One's Strength

At the peak of Mount Wiesel. The teleportation array lit up again and again.

“So many experts have appeared. They all have such terrifying auras! Far more powerful than even our tribe's elder...can they all be Deities?” That Azure Steelwing Hawk quietly hid within the thick foliage, staring towards the distant mountain peak. This elf-turned-hawk, upon seeing the many Deities descended, had been terrified into motionlessness. Those two magical beasts that had been fighting fiercely were terrified into no longer fighting as well.

A group of Highgods appeared once more at the peak of the mountain. Just like before; the group was huge!

“If we add in this group, there has to have been more than ten thousand people already.” The young druid murmured silently.

This group of Highgods was led by a man dressed in a long white robe, with white hair and white eyebrows. His brows, however, were nearly vertical, and his eyes were as crafty as a fox's. This person was someone Linley was quite familiar with; the Highgod Paragon of Wind, ‘Bayer’!

Just as Bayer began to order the people who had been brought over to advance...

Suddenly, a different teleportation array lit up.

“Eh?” The young druid was surprised.

In the past, each teleportation array saw more than a hundred people pass through. But this time, there were only two! A youth and a youngster.

“Although there are only two, judging from their look...that group of a thousand Highgods seems to be quite terrified of that youth and youngster.” The young druid could clearly see that the newcomer youth was face to face with the white-robed, white-haired, white-browed man. They were chatting about something.

These two were of course, Linley and Bebe.

“Bayer, don't be so arrogant. It remains to be seen who will be the one to acquire the red caltrop diamond.” Bebe snorted coldly.

Bayer, in the Planar Battlefield, had engaged in a battle with Linley's squad. It could be said that there was an old grudge between the two.

“Then we'll just have to wait and see.” Bayer swept Linley and Bebe with an icy gaze. He knew that Linley and Magnus had duelled each other, and that Magnus had even been exiled into chaotic space. Thus, Bayer didn't dare go too far either.

“Let's go!” Bayer gave the order.

Immediately, that vast group flew away and departed, leaving behind only Linley and Bebe, who stood there at the peak of the mountain.

“I thought that we had moved quite quickly. I didn’t imagine that so many people would have already arrived at this Okerlund Plane.” Linley smiled slightly, then spread out his divine sense. Instantly, it spread out to encompass not just the two continents, but also the vast, endless sea. “This Okerlund Plane is quite large. Even Highgod Paragons would need to use Sovereign’s Might in order to cover the entire plane with their divine sense. If they don’t, they would at most be able to extend their divine sense to part of a continent, perhaps to a circumference of just a hundred million kilometers.”

Although Highgod Paragons had the power of Will, their souls weren’t that powerful; if they simply relied on their own spiritual strength, the amount of area their divine sense could cover wasn’t that large.

In the Planar Battlefield, if Highgod Paragons relied on their own spiritual energy, the area their divine sense could cover was very small. Only by relying on Sovereign’s Might were they able to extend it to eight thousand kilometers! When Linley used Sovereign’s Might, he could extend his divine sense to thirty six thousand kilometers! But if he relied on his own spiritual energy, he could stretch to five hundred and twelve kilometers!

In a material plane? Linley could control his spiritual energy to cover an entire plane!

“Boss, did you find the red caltrop diamond?” Bebe asked.

Linley began to frown. “Huh. Strange!”

“What is it?” Bebe was a bit worried.

“The entire Okerlund Plane has more than ten thousand Highgods already. Bayer, Dunnington...quite a few Paragons have arrived as well. But there are only two Gods. Clearly, they aren’t Brodie.” Linley was completely puzzled. “In addition, I haven’t located the red caltrop diamond despite searching the entire plane. It might be hidden within an interspatial ring, making it impossible for me to find it.”

Even Sovereigns wouldn’t be able to locate items that were hidden in interspatial rings.

“Boss, Brodie’s not here, and the red caltrop diamond isn’t here either...could it be that Brodie has already left the Okerlund Plane?” Bebe said, worried. “Could it be that he just passed through here, so as to deceive his trackers?”

Linley frowned. “This is a possibility.”

“If we want to investigate as to what happened after Brodie arrived, the easiest way is to ask the Planar Overseer.” Linley swept the nearby courtyard atop the mountain with his gaze. “Now where did the Planar Overseer go?”

“Could it be that the Planar Overseer was already captured by others?” Bebe asked hurriedly.

“Planar Overseers generally aren’t that strong. Most are Gods, while a few are Highgods.” Linley’s divine sense encompassed the entire Okerlund Plane.

After his soul mutation, the strength of his spiritual energy far surpassed that of others using Sovereign’s Might, especially given that he had a Will that was even stronger than that of Paragons.

These other Paragons weren’t able to detect Linley spreading his divine sense out at all.

It was much like how Linley wouldn’t be able to detect it when Sovereigns spread out their divine sense.

“The Okerlund Plane...amongst Deities, aside from a number of Demigods and two Gods, everyone else is a Highgod.” Linley frowned.

As he saw it, the Planar Overseer should be one of the Gods or Highgods.

“Those two Gods...one is female, and her appearance is similar to many sculptures that are located throughout that continent. It seems as though she is that ‘Radiant Goddess’ whom they worship. As for that beastman, he looks like the ‘Beastgod’ carvings that exist in the other continent.” Linley understood that these two shouldn’t be Planar Overseers.

In the material planes...there were some churches that didn’t wholly worship any Sovereigns.

For example, in the Yulan Plane, there were those who worshipped the War God, O’Brien. In the Baruch Empire, there were many who worshipped Linley. Anyone who became a Deity would be able to use and enjoy the power of faith. The power of faith would improve one’s soul, and generally speaking, when training, one would be able to train much more quickly.

For example, when meditating on the profound mysteries, if one had a great reserve of faith energy, many profound mysteries that were originally very hard to understand might suddenly become clearer and more relatable.

But of course...

Faith energy was still an outside source of help. In training, one’s own strength was still the most important. For example, although many Sovereigns enjoyed the benefits of almost unlimited amounts of faith energy, in terms of the profound mysteries, they might spend countless years yet still be unable to become Paragons.

“Boss, that Planar Overseer might be a Highgod.” Bebe said.

“That’s possible.” Linley said with a frown. “But I’m worried about something.”

“Worried about what?” Bebe asked, puzzled.

“I’m worried...that the first people who arrived took away the Planar Overseer, acquired some important information from him, and then, to ensure the others wouldn’t gain that information, kill the Planar Overseer.” Linley had a hint of worry in his brows. He had already come at maximum speed.

But the others had been even faster!

“How could those people have moved so quickly? Boss, your speed far surpasses the speed of most Paragons.” Bebe mumbled.

“Most likely, those Paragons were brought by the Sovereigns directly to the teleportation arrays. I’m fast, but I’m far from being as fast as a Sovereign. As for those groups of Highgods, they are probably Highgods who were drawn from the armies stationed around the teleportation arrays.” Linley was just guessing, but he felt quite certain about his guess.

And in reality, it really was as Linley suspected.

Sovereigns cared deeply about the Overgod talismans. Thus, it would be normal for them to bring a Paragon with them in making haste to the teleportation array.

“Rumble...” The teleportation array lit up once more.

Linley glanced at it, frowning. “There really are quite a few people here. Bebe, let’s leave.”

A surge of wind-type divine power swirled around Linley and Bebe. The two transformed into green blurs, instantly disappearing into the horizon. Linley, the other Deities, and the Paragons...none of them noticed that not too far away, amidst the trees, there was that Azure Steelwing Hawk.

As they saw it, that was just a magical beast. They wouldn't even glance at it.

“Wow, what sort of speed is this? Although that group of people was fast, I could at least still see them move. But those two...” The Azure Steelwing Hawk was completely stunned.

More than ten thousand Highgods had descended. Their awe-inspiring presence as they flew through the air completely terrified the Saint-level experts of the Okerlund Plane. Soon, the news regarding the ‘Descent of the Gods’ quickly spread out. The Radiant Temple was the first to receive this news, and the Radiant Goddess personally ordered that the forces of the Radiant Temple were to pay attention to their behavior, and that they weren't to offend these mysterious figures.

As for the Radiant Goddess herself, she saw that vast group of experts as well.

Good heavens. She was a God! In a material plane, she was invincible! But every single one of those thousand-plus individuals were more powerful than her. Any one of them could annihilate the Radiant Church.

The territory of the Fogdeep continent was too vast, stretching millions of miles...a continent such as this, in the Infernal Realm, was nothing, but it was still thousands of times larger than the Yulan continent. The number of empires, kingdoms, and alliances within the Fogdeep continent came to a frighteningly large figure, and most people would never be able to traverse the entire Fogdeep continent in their entire lives.

At the eastern region of the Fogdeep continent. Atop Mount Liangya, within the Moulin Empire. A new estate had suddenly appeared out of nowhere atop the mountain.

Quite a few of the more intelligent people who lived around Mount Liangya immediately understood...that perhaps even Saints wouldn't be able to suddenly create a new estate atop the mountain. Immediately, quite a few people began to climb up Mount Liangya, wanting to go meet the mysterious expert within the estate. They hoped to take this person on as their master!

If they could be guided by an expert, their futures would change.

Unfortunately...

The closer they drew to the estate, the more terrifyingly powerful the gravity became. Even the number one expert in the area around Mount Liangya, an expert of the ninth rank who had come in the hopes of taking on a master, found that upon reaching a distance of six hundred meters from the estate, he was unable to advance a single step further. From this, one could imagine how powerful the gravity was!

That expert of the ninth rank immediately sighed, “Such a terrifyingly powerful gravitational technique...this is definitely something which only Deities are capable of!”

Within the estate in Mount Liangya. Linley and Bebe were residing here.

Three full days! Linley could say with confidence that he had thoroughly searched the entire Okerlund Plane!

“I originally thought that Brodie would hide the red caltrop diamond deep in the seas, or deep under the earth. But now, it seems, my guess was wrong.” Linley shook his head. It was easy for him to send his divine sense into the empty air, but the deeper one went into the ground, the harder it became.

When his spirit sense had already stretched to cover the entire plane, not even Linley would be able to make it stretch to more than a million meters into the ground. It was simply too hard.

Linley had spent three days. It could be said that he had inspected every single part of the entire Okerlund Plane!

“Boss, can it be that Brodie really did just transit through here? He intentionally made multiple transits to fool people?” Bebe mumbled.

“Everything is possible! The simplest thing to do right now is to find that Planar Overseer. He definitely knows quite a few things.” Linley had no other options.

“But we don’t know that Planar Overseer.” Bebe’s eyes lit up. “Boss, let’s just ask around and see whose forces were the first to arrive, then go find the leader of that group. Boss, now that you’ve fused four types of divine power, your power should vastly surpass the power of a Paragon. If that Paragon dares to refuse to give you an explanation, then beat the crap out of him or even kill him, then have his subordinates hand the person over. Let’s see if they dare refuse!”

A four-way soul mutation. This had bestowed Linley with a Will greater than a Paragon’s.

In addition, his body was now almost as strong and durable as a Sovereign artifact!

Linley’s material attacks, in the past, had already been a bit more powerful than Magnus’. Now his body had dramatically strengthened, and his divine power had also strengthened tenfold! In terms of material attacks...Linley could absolutely lay claim to being the number one Deity!

“I might have the ability to kill Paragons.” Linley said with a frown. “However, this isn’t the time to reveal my power yet. If I were to pressure them with raw force and make it so that the Paragons of the Okerlund Plane were aware of my power, those Paragons would probably join forces against me out of fear!”

Paragons were invincible amongst Deities. This was a well-known legend!

But in the face of a never-before-seen four-way Soul Mutate, this legend regarding Paragons had been shattered! If the Paragons knew how powerful Linley was, and that they wouldn’t be able to fight him one-on-one, they would definitely form an alliance to block Linley! By then, the difficulty level for acquiring the red caltrop diamond would rise greatly.

The largest tree in the forest would attract the most wind.

This was a principle which Linley understood.

“Right now, what I need to do is continue to pretend that I am a Paragon. I can’t reveal too much power.” Linley laughed calmly. “Once the red caltrop diamond appears, I can show my power. By then, I would have already acquired the red caltrop diamond. It would be too late for them! I imagine...I’m not the only one searching for that Planar Overseer. The other Paragons are searching as well.”

“Boss, are you saying...?” Bebe understood.

“Join forces! Join forces with the other Paragons and force the Paragon who captured the Planar Overseer to hand him over and give us his information.” Linley’s divine sense was continually scanning the Okerlund Plane, and he immediately reached out directly into the mind of Dunnington. “And Dunnington...is the best person for me to join forces with.”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 35,

Coercion

The Okerlund Plane. Fogdeep continent's eastern regions. Within the Wildfang Mountains. Dunnington's forces from the Infernal Realm were stationed here.

Deep within the Wildfang Mountains, multiple palaces suddenly appeared overnight. Deep within one of the palaces, within a dark, gloomy hall that was lit up by flickering green fire light, there was a single person seated quietly. At this moment, someone walked into the main hall.

“Milord, I’ve already led those five hundred Highgods to do a thorough search of the entire Beastgod continent. We didn’t find even a trace of the red caltrop diamond though.” A muscular, tall, cyan-haired man dressed in a tunic spoke resignedly. As he spoke, he had a sour grimace on his face.

“The Fogdeep continent...I used up Sovereign’s Might and even searched underground, but found nothing.”

Dunnington, covered in a dark green robe, had an unpleasant look on his face. “Neither of these two continents holds it. How about this. You lead that group to the seas to continue searching carefully! Don’t just search deep in watery regions of the seas; even the mud and earth of the seabed needs to be searched thoroughly, until you reach the ends of the plane.”

“Yes, milord.” The cyan-haired man nodded, but by the looks of it, he was still acting in a fairly casual way before Dunnington.

“Milord...we don’t have that many forces. As I see it, quite a few people have already come, and the other forces have already covered the entire Okerlund Plane. When you agreed to help the Chief Sovereign of Destruction...when you brought us over, you should’ve brought some more soldiers.” The cyan-haired man said, worried.

“You worry about your matters. You don’t need to worry about these affairs.” Dunnington frowned.

“Yes.” The cyan-haired man, seeing that Dunnington was unhappy, immediately left, not daring to say anything else.

Dunnington sat there quietly, but he was quite frustrated as well. Upon arriving in the Okerlund Plane, he knew that the situation was terrible! Because there were simply too many Paragons who had come on this trip. How few Paragons did the countless planes of the multiverse hold? And yet, including Dunnington, nine had come to the Okerlund Plane!

Although there were twenty or thirty people ‘suspected’ of being Paragons...

Quite a few were hidden in remote areas or even hidden within material planes. Not even Sovereigns were able to locate those Paragons. Normally, it would be very rare for two Paragons to meet each other. Three Paragons being in one place was virtually inconceivable. Nine Paragons...it was only because so many Sovereigns were all interested in this matter, that so many Paragons had appeared in one place.

“With so many Paragons...once the red caltrop diamond appears, how could it be easy to acquire?” Dunnington secretly shook his head.

“Dunnington?” A voice suddenly rang out in his mind.

“Eh? Linley?” Dunnington immediately knew who it was and he chatted back through divine sense, “Linley, we haven’t met each other since you became a Paragon, right?”

“I just reached this level recently.” Linley laughed, then asked, “Dunnington, did you find anything out about the red caltrop diamond?”

“Nothing. Nothing at all. How about you?” Dunnington asked.

These two supreme Deities were thousands of kilometers away, but were able to chat casually through their divine senses.

“Me? You have eight hundred Highgods under your command but weren’t able to find it. Bebe and I are by ourselves. How are we supposed to?” Linley laughed with pursed lips. Linley didn’t want to reveal the fact that he was a Soul Mutate.

“Linley, I don’t want to criticize you, but given your status in the Four Divine Beasts clan, it wouldn’t be too hard for you to summon a few thousand people from the clan. With a few thousand subordinates, it would be much easier for you to search the Okerlund Plane. But you just came by yourself, with Bebe...” Dunnington sighed.

If one considered Linley a Paragon, the Okerlund Plane now had nine Paragons present.

But aside from the Paragons themselves, every single force had brought a large group of Highgods, generally at least a thousand or more.

“To lead forces from the Four Divine Beasts clan to the teleportation array would take too long. Those ordinary Highgods also fly much slower than you and me! If I did that, it would probably take me quite a few extra months to get here. During those months, I imagine the rest of you would’ve already found the red caltrop diamond. Of course I wasn’t going to wait, so I led Bebe and came.” Linley laughed.

Dunnington now understood.

The others had ordered for soldiers stationed around the teleportation arrays to assist them, and so hadn’t taken much time at all.

“Enough about that. Dunnington, do you think Brodie actually, truly left the red caltrop diamond in this Okerlund Plane?” Linley asked.

“I really am a bit suspicious, given that Brodie isn’t here in this plane.” Dunnington said. “Now, I want to find the Planar Overseer, but...I wasn’t able to. I imagine that the Planar Overseer should have been taken away by the Paragon of Fire, Ballmer [Ba’mo]. That’s because he was the first to arrive at the Okerlund Plane.” Dunnington said.

“Ballmer?”

Quite a bit of information regarding Ballmer came to Linley’s mind.

“Dunnington, the information which the Planar Overseer has is extremely important! How about...we join forces and coerce Ballmer to hand over the Planar Overseer. What do you say?” Linley advised.

“Coerce?”

A smile appeared on Dunnington’s face. “Good idea. I’m not confident in being able to act against Ballmer by myself...but if we join forces and pincer attack him, even if Ballmer doesn’t die, he’ll still suffer quite a bit. It wouldn’t be hard for us to exile him. I imagine that Ballmer wouldn’t want to suffer like that for no reason.”

“Fine, then. When should we join forces and go find Ballmer?”

Linley and Dunnington discussed this matter for quite some time.

Fogdeep continent. The Biers [Pi'er'si] Mountains.

The Biers Mountains were more than ten thousand kilometers long and hundreds of kilometers wide. They were like a sharp knife that just so happened to separate the Moulin Empire from the Bluemaple Empire. However, in the center of the Biers Mountains, there was an extremely deep gorge known as ‘Divine Punishment’. This gorge actually pierced through the entire Biers Mountains.

The people of the two Empires could pass through to the other side through this gorge.

The reason why this place was known as the ‘Divine Punishment Gorge’ was because, according to legend...two gods had battled here, and then, with one astonishing blade chop, carved a path through the entire mountain range, leaving behind this hundred-kilometers-long Divine Punishment Gorge.

But because the gorge connected these two empires, the two empires both set down many soldiers on each side. These two armies would often engage in battles over various problems!

“Rumble...”

The earth was trembling. Hoofsteps rang out unabated. Under the commands of the military officers, the two armies prepared their formations as they stared at each other.

Because these two empires didn't share any other borders...this gorge was the only place where they did battle. They would even fight over the smallest of problems. The reason they did this was because both empires had subconsciously come to view the battles within the gorge as a place to train their armies. Only soldiers who had seen blood would truly be able to fight.

Every few months or every few years, there would be a major battle. Each time, tens of thousands of casualties would result. This was very normal.

After all, these two empires, even in the vast Fogdeep continent, were two fairly powerful empires, with populations that were in the tens of billions.

“Vanguard battalions, advance!”

A warrior dressed in golden armor was seated high up on the back of a completely black serpent. He gave the order.

The commanding generals of both armies both understood that there was no way the two empires would actually, truly fight each other. This was just a way for them to train their soldiers. But precisely because they wanted to train their soldiers...it made it so that over the course of the struggles, they would swear to surpass the enemy's side.

Immediately, the two military formations began to wildly charge against each other.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” Arrows filled the skies as the vanguards of each army burst towards each other in a flood. Blood immediately began to fly everywhere, and some of the young ‘chicklets’ who were experiencing war for the first time were so terrified that their legs went soft. Life...death...things were so simple on the battlefield. Only someone who experienced a life-and-death battle would become a true soldier!

Right at this moment...

Two figures appeared, flashing through the skies.

“Eh?” The supreme experts of the two armies all raised their heads, frowning in confusion. “Saints?”

“Linley, what are you sighing for?” It was Linley and Dunnington. They flew through the air, and Linley laughed as he lowered his head to glance at the battle going on within the gorge. “When I see these vicious battles, I think back to my home, the Yulan continent. However, the battles that go on here at the Fogdeep continent are clearly on a much larger scale than the wars of my Yulan continent, be in in terms of the numbers of soldiers or the numbers of experts.”

“Material planes...” Dunnington said calmly, “I was born and grew up in the Infernal Realm. I don’t know too much about these material planes.”

“Material planes are still quite interesting.” Linley laughed calmly. “Only, the Okerlund Plane is simply too populated.”

A continent that stretched to a circumference of a hundred million kilometers.

And the Yulan continent? It was, what, just thirty thousand kilometers or so. How vast the difference was!

As for the difference in population, it was perhaps a thousandth, or a ten-thousandth, of this continent’s. Naturally, the number of Saints in the Yulan continent was much lower as well. These two continents even had quite a few Deities.

“Ballmer’s residence is up ahead.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Right. Let me speak with Ballmer first.” Dunnington and Linley halted there in midair. Below them, not too far away, were a series of fiery red palaces.

Dunnington immediately spread out his divine sense to negotiate with Ballmer.

“Ballmer!”

“Dunnington!” The Paragon of Fire within a palace, Ballmer, immediately responded.

“Yours was the first group to enter the Okerlund Plane. The Planar Overseer should be with you, yes? We are all here for the red caltrop diamond. Everyone needs to compete fairly. You had best hand over the Planar Overseer. It wouldn’t be good for you to keep the information regarding Brodie to yourself.” Dunnington urged.

The only response to Dunnington’s words was a single, cold snort.

Dunnington’s face sank.

“Linley is next to me. We all hope that you will hand over the Planar Overseer.” Dunnington then said.

“Linley?” Ballmer sent back a loud laugh. “How laughable. You aren’t able to find the Planar Overseer, so you come searching for me? Let me tell you this; when I arrived at the Okerlund Plane, I didn’t see the Planar Overseer anywhere. Most likely, the Planar Overseer is somewhere else in the Okerlund Plane.”

The wind howled in the air above the Biers Mountains. Two figures stood tall amidst the wind. Dunnington gave Linley a glance.

“He refuses to admit it?” Linley laughed calmly.

“Right.” Dunnington laughed as well.

“I thought Ballmer was quite astute, but it seems...” Linley laughed, and Dunnington laughed as well.

The two had planned this out long ago.

If words wouldn’t work, then they would move to actions!

“Watch this.” Linley stretched his hand out, and a black sword appeared within it. With but a thought, he made it turn translucent.

“Break!”

Linley stared coldly downwards, then launched a sword attack. A terrifying, enormous azure sword light howled downwards, and the space below twisted, then tore apart like paper. The space and stones below were transformed into nothingness, and the Highgods within the palaces all fled in every direction in terror.

It was a spatial tempest!

What would’ve been a terrifying sword blow in the Infernal Realm had transformed into a terrifying spatial tempest here in a material plane.

Only a long time later did space return to normal.

But the mountains below Linley had completely vanished. The only thing remaining was a fathomlessly deep gorge.

Countless figures flew into the skies, with the leader being a cyan-robed, fiery-haired man. His eyes were filled with rage, and he stared angrily at the distant Linley and Dunnington. “Linley, why did you destroy my estate for no reason?”

Dunnington just began to laugh. “Why? Don’t you know?”

“Stop playing dumb.” Linley laughed calmly.

Although there were more than a thousand Highgods hovering there in the air, they didn’t dare to interfere. They just quietly watched as this scene unfolded. After all...it was three ‘Paragons’ speaking. Any of the three could effortlessly butcher them all.

“Hand over the Planar Overseer.” Linley said.

“Otherwise...well. You know.” Dunnington continued.

Ballmer’s face was red, and a fiery light flickered in his eyes.

“I told you. The Planar Overseer isn’t here!” Ballmer shouted angrily.

“More lies.” Dunnington shook his head and sighed. “Linley, looks like we have no other options.”

“We really don’t.” Linley laughed, and then, quite casually, he said, “Let’s act!”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 36, Nine Supreme Experts

In the air above the Biers Mountains, Linley and Dunnington, not hesitating at all, transformed into two blurs which pincer-attacked Ballmer! The constrictive power of a material plane was far lower than that of the Infernal Realm, and so Linley and Dunnington were able to move at an unheard of speed; it was as though they were teleporting.

“Attacking? Haha...”

Ballmer's wild laughter echoed in the air, while his entire body began to blaze with fiery tongues of flame that swirled about him. The heat around him was so great that even space itself began to crack from it. Ballmer actually paid no heed to Dunnington, instead going straight for Linley.

“Careful.” Dunnington sent.

Linley just laughed calmly and watched.

“Whoosh!” Ballmer transformed into a streak of fire, passing directly through Linley's body, then resolidifying into Ballmer's appearance behind Linley.

“The same technique which Bluefire used.” Linley laughed and turned.

“How could it be that he didn't react at all?” Ballmer was shocked.

Paragons who trained in the Laws of Fire definitely had the most powerful attacks. Their material attacks and soul attacks were both tremendously strong.

“A soul attack? Too weak.” Linley laughed as he looked at Ballmer. In terms of soul strength, how could Ballmer compare to a Soul Mutate like Linley? And Linley had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!

“My turn.” Linley suddenly moved.

That Mirage godspark sword in his hand leisurely chopped down towards Ballmer. Space just trembled slightly; Mirage seemed to teleport, directly appearing in front of Ballmer. The attack speed of a Paragon was far greater than their movement speed; there was no chance for Ballmer to dodge at all.

“Hmph.” Ballmer wasn't afraid. The attacks of a Paragon of Fire were also exceedingly strong. With a flip of his hand, he revealed a fiery red greatsword.

“Clang!”

The fiery greatsword and Mirage suddenly clashed.

“What great power.” Linley felt his hand tremble, but that was just the flesh in his palm; the remaining strength was dispersed. After fusing with four types of divine power and having his body transformed, Linley's body was now simply too powerful. Even without Dragonforming, his physical strength would be ranked amongst the top ten in the entire multiverse!

Having a defensive Sovereign artifact and having a body that was akin to a Sovereign artifact...these were two completely different things.

Having a defensive Sovereign artifact just meant that one's defense would be strong; it didn't mean one would increase in physical power.

But for someone whose body was akin to a Sovereign artifact, that person's brute strength alone would be terrifyingly great.

For example, Beirut or Hemmers...their bodies were simply too powerful. They had too much brute strength. Even without having reached the level of Paragon, their material attacks were comparable to those of Paragons.

As for Linley, his brute strength was no lower than Beirut or Hemmers'. In addition, he had the power of Will!

This made it so that...

In this clash, Linley's palm just trembled slightly, while Ballmer's entire body was knocked flying backwards.

"Bang!"

Ballmer's body slammed hard against the mountain rocks, and the counterforce of their collision was transmitted to the mountain. A power that was capable of making a Highgod Paragon be knocked back that far...how could the mountains of a material plane withstand it?

"Rumble..."

A layer of rocks transformed into sand, and then a powerful tremor swept through the mountainous rocks like an ocean wave, transforming them into sand. It was like a ripple that swept out to a distance of hundreds of kilometers; it even swept through the air, from one mountain to another mountain.

All of the mountain peaks within hundreds of kilometers seemed to have been sliced through by an enormous greatsword that was hundreds of kilometers long. It was extremely flat and equally distributed.

Divine Punishment Gorge was only a ten or so kilometers away from Linley's battle. Naturally, it was within that region.

The hundreds of thousands of warriors within the gorge only felt the entire space tremble violently, and then...

"Rustle..."

The upper halves of the mountain peaks above each side of the gorge were completely transformed into sand, and then with a rustling sound, the dust began to flow downwards.

"Retreat, quick, retreat!"

These soldiers all began to bellow.

Countless amounts of sand flowed downwards. If they were to be buried under this avalanche of dust...even the most powerful of warriors would suffocate to death.

Moments later, an enormous sand pile that was hundreds of meters high appeared within the gorge.

"Good heavens. A sand dune that is the size of a small mountain. Anyone trapped in it would definitely die. Fortunately, I managed to flee fast enough." Quite a few warriors stared at the mountain of sand and felt a surge of fear. This terrifying, gigantic dune had already completely sealed off the center of the gorge."

“What’s going on? Where did all of this sand come from?”

“Good heavens. The mountain peaks are all missing. They’ve been completely flattened. It is as though an invincible celestial divinity used a blade to completely flatten the mountains nearby.”

“Those mountain peaks were still standing just moments ago. Where did they disappear to?”

Many of the soldiers raised their heads to stare, completely stupefied.

The high level military officials and powerful experts of each side were also stunned.

“A miracle!”

Quite a few people stared with wide eyes. At this moment, the two armies had no desire to keep fighting at all. They were too stunned by this ‘miracle’. Actually, even if they wanted to fight, there was no way to; that sand dune was hundreds of meters high, and it completely blocked off both sides.

“Let’s go up and take a look.” Quite a few people in both armies were mounted on flying magical beasts, and they rose into the skies.

There were also some magi, and even a few rare Saints who were able to rely on their own power to fly into the skies. They all wanted to see what had happened, exactly.

“So many Saint-level experts.” Quite a few people stared, stupefied, at the thronging mass of Highgods hovering in the air.

“Swish!” A figure suddenly shot over, and then smashed hard against the rocky walls of a large gorge. “Rumble...” The entire gorge seemed to tremble, and then a layer of stone that was more than ten meters thick was transformed into sand and flowed downwards.

The fiery figure that had slammed into the gorge once more flew into the air.

“Linley, I told you, I didn’t catch the Planar Overseer.” The fiery red figure began to bellow.

The soldiers below frantically tried to dodge and hide. Fortunately, this time, the sand that fell down was only a few meters thick, and so the soldiers were able to save themselves. Quite a few warriors emerged from the sand, raising their heads to stare at the fiery figure. “What...what sort of people are they!?”

A collision was enough to cause a scene of such devastation?

“You’d rather die than admit it?” A voice echoed in the skies.

“Gods...celestial divinities!”

Those soldiers took the speakers to be celestial divinities. These soldiers had no idea what came after Saints. As they saw it... ‘gods’ and ‘celestial divinities’ were essentially the same thing.

Right at this moment, two figures appeared above the gorge, staring at the fiery figure.

“Linley, your material attacks truly are terrifying.” Dunnington sighed in amazement.

“My Azure Dragon clan has always specialized in strengthening the body, and so my body was strong to begin with. Now that I have the power of Will and have mastered the profound mysteries, of course I’m a bit stronger than most Paragons in terms of material attacks.” Linley smiled.

“A bit stronger?” The nearby Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, felt bitterness in his heart.

That wasn't a 'bit' stronger, it was significantly stronger! This was abusive!

"Fortunately, although I'm not able to completely defend against this sort of attack, it won't kill me either." Ballmer still felt some confidence. What Ballmer didn't realize...was that the power which Linley had just revealed, despite vastly outstripping Ballmer's own, was just a small part of Linley's true power. Linley's true killing technique, the four-way 'fused divine power', had yet to be used.

If he had used fused divine power, his attack power would increase tenfold.

Tenfold. What sort of a concept was that? It would be completely lopsided!

Ballmer looked downwards at the stupefied commoners. He couldn't help but feel angry that these ordinary mortals had seen him lose face like this, which made him both enraged and embarrassed. "A group of ants." Ballmer waved his hand, and instantly, a surge of fiery energy swept out, completely covering the skies and forming into an uninterrupted sea of flame above the gorge.

This sea of flame was hundreds of kilometers long. It covered the entire gorge, rendering it so that those below weren't able to see anything going on above. As for within the gorge...in the future, it would be referred to by the denizens of the Okerlund Plane as the 'Apocalypse Flame Gorge'. The flames which Ballmer had casually created...were flames which even Highgods wouldn't dare touch.

"Linley, Dunnington, it's completely impossible for the two of you to kill me." Ballmer said angrily. "I told you, the Planar Overseer isn't here."

"Haha, Ballmer, stop denying it." With this voice, a figure suddenly appeared.

"Ballmer, your material attacks are far weaker than Linley's." Yet another figure appeared.

"You!" Ballmer frowned. Two more Paragons had arrived. Ballmer stretched out his divine sense...and upon doing so, he frowned. It wasn't actually just two more Paragons who had arrived; the other Paragons were hastening over here as well.

Ballmer had a very ugly look on his face.

"Ballmer, don't deny having the Planar Overseer. Just hand him over." This speaker's entire body was covered with an earthen yellow light. His muscles bulged, and his blue veins were like branches that twined about throughout his terrifyingly muscular four-meter-tall figure.

"Alas, if you insist on just denying it, you'll just suffer more." A snicker rang out. The speaker was Bayer.

In but a twinkling, all of the other Paragons had arrived as well.

"Haha, I ended up being the last one." A shadow flashed forward; the latecomer was the Paragon of Light, 'Clementine'.

Including Linley, there were eight people present. These eight all stared at Ballmer.

"Hmph. You all came." Ballmer had a gloomy look on his face, and he snorted angrily, "I told you. The Planar Overseer isn't here."

The unending flames blazed above the gorge, and above the flames, nine supreme Deities stood there, eight surrounding one! Ballmer was definitely in a weak position.

"Ballmer won't admit it. Dunnington, it's up to you." The Paragon of Light, Clementine, pursed his lips and laughed.

Dunnington winked at Ballmer. “Ballmer, can it be...that you are going to force me to hypnotize and control one of your Highgods?”

Ballmer’s face instantly changed.

He finally realized what his flaw was!

It was extremely hard to use hypnosis to control a Highgod, but Dunnington was capable of it. ‘Soulseed’, ‘Hypnosis’, creating soul shards...these all belonged to the Edicts of Death. If one didn’t train in the Edicts of Death, and instead trained in fire or water, even if one became a Paragon, one would be unable to use Soulseeds and hypnosis, or create soul shards from scraping away someone’s soul.

Every area had its own specialties. If one didn’t train in the Edicts of Death, no matter how powerful one was, one wouldn’t be able to use ‘Hypnosis’.

“The Planar Overseer truly isn’t here.” Ballmer said.

The looks on the faces of the eight experts, Linley included, sank. Clearly, they felt that Ballmer really didn’t know what was good for him.

“He’s dead. I killed him.” Ballmer then said.

The eyes of the eight experts lit up.

Ballmer chuckled, “I’m now the only person that knows about Brodie. However, since you’ve decided to go this far in forcing me, I can’t make it so that you were did this all for nothing. I’ll tell you. After all...even if you know, it won’t be of much use.”

“You aren’t the one to decide if this information is useful or not.” Bayer narrowed his vertical eyebrows as he said coldly.

Ballmer continued, “Brodie did indeed come to the Okerlund Plane, but just one year later, he took his wife and left the Okerlund Plane. He went to the Life Realm! However, when Brodie left the Okerlund Plane, he once said something to the Planar Overseer...”

The eight experts all stared at Ballmer.

“Brodie said... ‘Mr. Ben, if many Deities descend upon this place in search of something called a red caltrop diamond, please tell these Deities something for me. Tell them that the red caltrop diamond is right here in the Okerlund Plane. However, if they want to find it, it will depend on how lucky they are, haha...’” Ballmer finished speaking, then snickered coldly as he looked at everyone.

The eight experts all began to ponder.

Everyone sensed quite clearly that Brodie’s words contained a hint of mockery within them.

“Everyone, you tell me, is the red caltrop diamond in the Okerlund Plane?” Ballmer laughed coldly.

That’s what Brodie had claimed! But the truth? That was unclear.

There were two possibilities. The first was that the red caltrop diamond was truly in the Okerlund Plane; only, it was hidden too well, so it was very hard to find.

The second was that it left alongside Brodie as he went to another plane.

“Haha...think about it at your leisure. Whether you decide to give up and go back or decide to keep searching is up to you. I’ve already given you this information.” Laughing, Ballmer flew away. As he did so, Ballmer gave Linley a sidelong glance. Just now, when he had been fighting Linley, he had been at an absolute disadvantage.

“It seems as though Linley wasn’t just lucky when he exiled Magnus into chaotic space. Just now...he wasn’t even in Dragonform.” Ballmer, in his heart, began to feel a hint of dread towards Linley.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 37,

Infiltration

The Biers Mountains. In the air above the sea of flame which hung over the Divine Punishment Gorge. After the Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, departed, the other seven Paragons and Linley all continued to quietly hover there above the sea of fire. After hearing Ballmer's information, they all began to ponder.

"Brodie's message stated that the red caltrop diamond is still in the Okerlund Plane." Linley frowned as he pondered. "Brodie, after having been surrounded by so many experts of the Infernal Realm, should know by now how important that red caltrop diamond is. Perhaps...he has truly decided to give up the red caltrop diamond, in exchange for a peaceful life."

Before being surrounded by so many experts, Brodie might perhaps have been unaware as to just how hot to handle this red caltrop diamond was.

But after that and the loss of a divine clone, Brodie should've begun to wonder as to whether or not he should have continued to hold the red caltrop diamond! Although his power increased tremendously while holding it, it also caused countless experts to descend upon and pursue him.

"Everyone, you all know the message now. What do you all think? Is the red caltrop diamond still in the Okerlund Plane?" The Paragon of Light, Clementine, said with a smile.

"Hmph. If Brodie is playing a trick and has the desire to be greedy and keep the Overgod talisman on his own, he would be courting death." The Paragon of Earth, that four meter tall figure, said in a cold voice.

"If we believe that the red caltrop diamond isn't here, we might as well leave this plane." The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, let out a snicker. He glanced at the surrounding people. "Myself, I'll be staying here. Everyone...I won't accompany you here any longer. I'll go back now." A wind blew past, and Bayer disappeared from everyone's field of vision.

In a material plane, all Paragons were able to move at a speed that seemed akin to the speed of the Sovereigns in the Higher Planes.

"I won't stay here any longer either." Clementine also disappeared, transforming into a ray of light.

And then, all of the Highgod Paragons left, leaving behind only Linley and Dunnington.

"Linley, are you going to leave the Okerlund Plane or stay?" Dunnington asked.

"There's no rush. Perhaps the red caltrop diamond is still in the Okerlund Plane." Linley said with a slight frown, but then he chuckled. "Dunnington, let's compete and see who will be the one to acquire the red caltrop diamond...mm, let's separate for now then."

"You don't have as many supporters as I do. If someone is to get it, it will be me." Dunnington began to laugh as well.

And then, Linley and Dunnington transformed into two blurs as they flew towards different directions.

Originally, after having thoroughly scoured the entire Okerlund Plane, Linley felt that there was a 90% chance that the red caltrop diamond truly might have departed the Okerlund Plane. The Okerlund Plane was

nothing more than a transit location for Brodie! As for that remaining 10% chance...that was just because Linley wasn't willing to just leave like this.

However, after having heard this message, Linley's thoughts had changed.

Given what Brodie had said, the red caltrop diamond might truly be still in the Okerlund Plane.

The eastern part of the Okerlund Plane. The Moulin Empire. Within that estate at the peak of Mount Liangya.

"Boss, what sort of tricks do you think Brodie employed?" Bebe, after listening to what Linley had to say, couldn't help but frown as he spoke.

"The red caltrop diamond is such a precious treasure that he naturally wouldn't want to let us acquire it so easily!" Linley said with a frown, "But I've already completely searched the entire Okerlund Plane. There is no red caltrop diamond at all. Then...there's only one possibility." This was the possibility that frustrated Linley the most.

"My divine sense can easily search the heavens, but it is hard for someone to use divine sense to search inside a person's body. Thus...the red caltrop diamond is perhaps hidden within the body of some sort of living creature!" Linley frowned.

It was extremely hard for one to send divine sense deep into the body of any living creature with a spirit.

For example, divine artifacts; divine artifacts had their own form of a spirit.

It was impossible for even Linley to send his spiritual energy into a divine artifact and search for something inside of it.

For example, Bebe's godspark weapon; he had hidden the interspatial ring within the godspark weapon, and even Sovereigns wouldn't be able to see through it to find the interspatial ring within. But of course, it was virtually impossible to hide a ring within a divine artifact. After all, in the forging and refining process for the divine artifact, any interspatial ring would have been destroyed long ago.

Only someone like Bebe, who completely relied on his own will in creating a godspark weapon, would be able to safely secrete an interspatial ring within it.

Aside from divine artifacts, other living creatures also possessed souls.

Every single living creature had a soul which would repel the spiritual energy of any invading forces! Because some souls were strong while others were weak, the strength of the resistance would vary as well.

Some living creatures were simply too powerful and so couldn't be invaded at all.

For example, Linley!

Generally speaking, Paragons might be able to chat with Linley through divine sense, but they definitely wouldn't be able to extend their divine senses into Linley's body and investigate the secrets it held.

But for weaker people, such as mortals...

If a Deity wanted to investigate a mortal, he would only have to just focus his spiritual energy slightly, and thus would be able to sense into the mortal's body. This, however, still required concentration and focus. One couldn't use too much spiritual energy, as if one did, the mortal's fragile soul might shatter and disperse. But if the spiritual energy was too weak...then it might not be able to go in at all.

Thus, it was hard to investigate into someone's body.

As for searching one's soul, that was even harder!

When Delia had been in a coma, Linley hadn't dared to send his spiritual energy into her to investigate at all. He was afraid that if he wasn't careful, he would shatter her soul.

"The Okerlund Plane is simply too vast. I imagine that Brodie chose this plane precisely because he heard of how populated it is." Linley said with a frown. "Even for me, to search the body of a human being is difficult enough that I can't investigate a few thousand people at once. I have to be very careful and very patient! At most, I can probably only search a thousand people at once."

This didn't have anything to do with how strong one's spiritual energy was; rather, what mattered was one's ability to multitask carefully, because each inspection had to be very careful.

The spiritual energy couldn't be too strong or too weak!

"The Okerlund Plane...although the population is far smaller than the Infernal Realm's, there are still nearly eight quadrillion people." Linley said with a frown.

This sum was simply too enormous.

There was nothing that could be done. The Okerlund Plane's two major continents each had a circumference of over a hundred million kilometers. The Yulan continent's circumference was just twenty or thirty thousand kilometers. The difference between the area of the two was a difference of nearly a hundred million times. Even the Yulan continent had a population of billions; thus, it only made sense for the Okerlund Plane to have a population of nearly eight quadrillion.

Compared to the Infernal Realm, though...

It was just a rounding error.

"Not just humans. There are also all sorts of magical beasts of the land, of the skies, and deep in the seas. The red caltrop diamond might be stored within their bodies as well." Linley said resignedly.

If he wanted to investigate further, it would indeed be a laborious task.

But of course, if he wanted to search quickly, that was also possible!

That was to ignore the ability of these humans and magical beasts to endure his power, and to blast his almighty divine sense out indiscriminately! The result would be that the countless humans and magical beasts with weak souls would always die. If one didn't have to worry about the lives of the specimens being inspected, of course it would be much faster.

But the number of people who would die would be astronomical.

"To kill eight quadrillion humans for the sake of more quickly finding the red caltrops diamond, and a similarly astonishing number of magical beasts? Make this entire plane a plane of the dead?" Linley couldn't help but shiver, just thinking about it.

Forget about using that sort of method; even if someone else dared to do it, Linley would stop them!

"Boss, the process of forging a divine artifact requires all sorts of hammering and refining. If an interspatial ring was within it, it would definitely shatter. Thus, it isn't too likely that the red caltrop diamond was hidden within a divine artifact." Bebe said. There were only two people in the entire multiverse who could do what Bebe could do.

Linley nodded. "Our only choice is to begin inspecting the bodies of the humans and beastmen."

“Brodie. That bastard. He really picked a good plane. If he picked a small plane like the Yulan plane, with a low population, it would be much easier to search. But that bastard had to pick this Okerlund Plane.” Bebe couldn’t help but curse.

“Don’t be impatient. The other eight groups have already begun to search the bodies of the various living creatures here.” Linley laughed calmly.

As for himself, he couldn’t be bothered to go search.

Linley’s divine sense was powerful enough to stretch across the entire plane. Once the red caltrop diamond being discovered, Linley would immediately know.

“I now only lack a single talisman.” Linley lowered his head, staring at the interspatial ring in his hands. He sent his divine sense into it, easily locating that ‘crown’ within it. The pentametal crown was adorned with the nine soul pearls, and was now only lacking a ‘red caltrop diamond’ in the central setting.

Now that Linley and Bebe were in the Okerlund Plane, they didn’t have to worry about Sovereigns causing problems for them, and so Bebe had given the interspatial ring containing those two items to Linley.

“Bebe, make a trip with me.” Linley suddenly stood up.

“What are you going to do?” Bebe was startled.

“I’ve discovered that the Paragon of Light, Clementine, hasn’t just ordered his Highgod subordinates to carefully search within the bodies of all sorts of living creatures; he himself has led his forces towards the headquarters of the Radiant Temple. It seems he wishes to borrow from the power of mortal organizations in order to search for the red caltrops diamond.” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face.

This was indeed an excellent method.

When Brodie had arrived at the Okerlund Plane, he might have often taken out the red caltrop diamond. Some mortals might thus have seen it. It was indeed possible that by relying on worldly power, they might find some hints regarding the diamond.

“He sought out the Radiant Temple. Then I will go for...the assassin’s guilds.”

Linley’s divine sense covered the entire plane. He naturally was able to easily discover many of the secrets of the Okerlund Plane.

The Okerlund Plane’s Fogdeep continent was awe-inspiringly vast. Because of how large it was, there was no way for a single empire to arise and unify it. The Fogdeep continent had more than a hundred empires alone, and duchies were as common as ox hair.

The power of some special, hidden organizations, however, surpassed that of any empire.

For example, the number one assassin’s guild of the Fogdeep continent, ‘Bloodknife’. According to legend, the number one expert who supported this assassin’s guild was someone who had reached the level of Deity. It also had hundreds of Saints as well.

Bloodknife didn’t have a central headquarter; its bases were divided into class-three, class-two, class-one, and special-class divisions.

Because the Fogdeep continent and the Beastgod continent were too vast, Bloodknife had a total of eight ‘special class’ bases, two of which were located on the Beastgod continent.

Bloodknife’s special-class base in the Mengya Mountains.

“A caltrop-shaped red diamond! Right, send the word to every single base, based on this diagram. Anyone who can provide any information regarding this red caltrop diamond will immediately be promoted to the rank of ‘core member’, and be awarded a tamed Saint-level magical beast, along with a soulbinding contract!” The number one expert of Bloodknife had already reached the Deity level. Known as ‘Elder Shadow’, this was the order he gave.

The ranking of this mission was ‘Blood-rank’.

It had been more than a hundred years since the last Blood-rank mission. Once the order went out, it was immediately conveyed to the various bases, and all of them immediately went crazy, ordering their forces, external intelligence, and even street-level hoodlums to begin searching for news about the red caltrop diamond.

However, Bloodknife’s members were all puzzled. Why would Elder Shadow so desperately want the red caltrop diamond, and even offer a tamed Saint-level magical beast as a reward?!

Within the Mengya Mountains. Inside a secluded, quiet residence.

An old man with blood-red hair and blood-red eyebrows bowed in an extremely respectful manner. “Lord Baruch, with regards to the matter of the red caltrop diamond, I’ve already notified all of the bases within the Fogdeep continent about it. As long as the red caltrop diamond has made an appearance, our organization will definitely locate it for you, milord.”

“However, our organization doesn’t have that much influence in the Beastgod continent.” The blood-haired elder said apologetically.

“You’ve done quite well already.” Linley smiled and nodded.

“Here are eleven God-level divine sparks. There is one for each of the seven Laws and four Edicts. This can be considered your reward.” Linley waved his hand, and eleven God-level divine sparks flew out.

The blood-haired elder’s eyes instantly turned red.

God-level divine sparks! To him, a Demigod, this was an absolutely wondrous treasure.

“Let me remind you that after you fuse with a divine spark, you will find it very hard to make any further breakthroughs on your own.” Linley said calmly.

“Your subordinate is willing to accept this.” The blood-haired elder said hurriedly. Upon becoming a God, he would be on a level comparable to the two formerly supreme experts of the Okerlund Empire.

“If you are able to find anything regarding the red caltrop diamond, I can give you a Highgod spark. Enough. You can leave now.” Linley said calmly.

“Yes, Lord Baruch.”

The blood-haired elder was so excited that his eyes were shining. He didn’t dare to disturb Linley any further, and he immediately departed.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 38,

Lionheart City

As Bebe watched the blood-haired elder depart, he pursed his lips. “That old fellow has remained in the material plane for too long. His viewpoint is too narrow and restricted. He’s too foolish. He actually, voluntarily wishes to fuse a divine spark.”

He’s not foolish. He’s intelligent.”

Linley laughed. “The Okerlund Plane, having a huge population base, has given birth to quite a few Deities. Most likely, the people here have some degree of understanding regarding the Infernal Realm, Netherworld, Celestial Realm, and other places. Unless they are able to reach the Six Star Fiend or Seven Star Fiend, going to the Infernal Realm is a form of suffering. That old fellow, in the Okerlund Plane, is a supreme expert. He can enjoy life and relax. Why go to the Higher Planes?”

Bebe was startled. Then, he nodded. “That’s true too.”

“Right, Boss. Did you tell my Grandpa Beirut regarding this Okerlund Plane?”

“Of course I did.” Linley laughed. “Your Grandpa Beirut’s clone in the Yulan continent is currently living at Dragonblood Castle with my divine clone. I’ve told him everything about what has gone on here... Lord Beirut has also tapped his connections and investigated into the Life Realm’s various locations to see if there has been news regarding the red caltrop diamond.”

Bebe nodded. “Right. We do have to pay attention.”

The red caltrop diamond. Even in his dreams, Linley dreamed about acquiring it!

Although it was very likely that the red caltrop diamond was in the Okerlund Plane, they couldn’t rule out the possibility that it had followed Brodie to another plane.

Thus, Linley had to rely on Beirut’s assistance. Beirut had quite a few friends. It wasn’t too hard for him to pay attention to news of this nature. However, in recent days, Beirut had uncovered no information regarding the red caltrop diamond.

Fogdeep continent. Beastgod continent. The dwellers of these two continents continued their normal lives. The ‘Descent of the Gods’ hadn’t changed much. The various Highgod Paragons and those ten thousand Highgods began to search the humans, elves, dwarves, beastmen, and other races, but they did so carefully. They didn’t harm these creatures.

As for Linley...

He maintained a constant watch on the entire plane. Those Highgods and Paragons... whenever they acted a bit unusually, Linley would pay close attention.

Given how Linley’s spiritual energy surpassed that of a Deity using Sovereign’s Might, this oversight went completely unnoticed by the Paragons.

Time continued to pass in the midst of this inspection process.

In the blink of an eye, two months passed.

Mount Liangya.

“Lord Baruch.” The blood-haired elder had come once more.

Linley and Bebe both looked over.

“Lord Baruch, your subordinate once more gained information regarding the red caltrop diamond.” The blood-haired elder said hurriedly.

“Oh?” Bebe just snickered. “In the past two months, you’ve brought over a few dozen reports, and even located ten red caltrop diamonds.”

In the past two months, the Bloodknife guild had indeed found more than ten red caltrop diamonds, but Linley had discovered through his divine sense that they were ‘fake’ and he had rejected them before they were even delivered to him.

“This...your subordinate is unable to verify these items.” The blood-haired elder laughed awkwardly, then said hurriedly, “But this time, this news does seem rather credible.”

“Speak.” Linley said calmly.

“Right.” The blood-haired elder said hurriedly, “Roughly thirty years ago, a magus who was training and adventuring at the borders of the Fogdeep Forest saw two experts flying through the air. They looked like a couple. The woman had a long necklace, which had a red caltrop diamond fixed into it.

Linley and Bebe’s eyes lit up.

Thirty years ago? A couple? Flying in the air?

“And that couple?” Linley said hurriedly.

“That adventuring magus only saw the two pause in midair for a moment to discuss something, and then they flew deeper towards the Fogdeep Forest. As what happened next, the magus didn’t know.” The blood-haired elder shook his head.

“You can leave now.” Linley said.

“Yes.” The blood-haired elder left respectfully.

Linley and Bebe began to frown.

“Boss, the situation is bad.” Bebe said.

“It is fairly bad. Brodie and his wife went deep into the Fogdeep Forest. Clearly, they were flying towards the teleportation array. Most likely, they went through it to leave the Okerlund Plane.” Linley began to worry. “If Brodie and his wife really took the red caltrop diamond and left this place, things will grow problematic. Searching for them will be like searching for a needle in the sea.”

Although according to the Planar Overseer’s information, the couple had gone to the Life Realm...

How vast was the Life Realm?

In addition, could it be that the two wouldn’t then pass through the teleportation array of the Life Realm and once more teleport to another plane?

How was one to find them?

“However, there’s another possibility.” Bebe mumbled. “They were flying deep into the Fogdeep Forest. Aside from leaving with the red caltrop diamond, the other possibility is, they hid the red caltrop diamond in some lifeform within the Fogdeep Forest.”

Linley’s eyes lit up.

“This is indeed possible.” Linley couldn’t help but feel overjoyed, but then he let out a sigh.

The Fogdeep Forest was tremendously vast, and the number of magical beasts and primeval races which lived within it was very large. To search for it there wouldn’t be easy either.

“Hrm, the Radiant Temple? That ‘Radiant Goddess’ has actually voluntarily gone to find Clementine. Can it be that something special happened?” Linley had always kept his divine sense active and covering the entire plane. Naturally, he noticed this.

Within the Fogdeep continent, there was a shining lake that was more than a million kilometers in circumference. In the center of the lake, there was a small island that had a circumference of nearly ten kilometers as well. This island was known as the ‘Radiant Island’, or the ‘Sacred Island’. This was the headquarters of the number one church of the Fogdeep continent, the Temple of the Radiant Goddess.

In the center of the Sacred Island was the Radiant Temple. The Radiant Temple was divided into nine upper stories and nine underground stories.

Ever since the Paragon of Light, ‘Clementine’, led his forces to descend on this place, he had let the Radiant Goddess suffer just a little bit. She then immediately, terrified, allowed Clementine to live on the top of the ninth floor. As for the Radiant Goddess herself, she remained on the sixth floor.

The sixth underground floor. A silver-haired, silver-eyed, barefoot woman dressed in plain robes was currently frowning. This person was the ‘Radiant Goddess’, worshipped by countless people in the Fogdeep continent.

“Lord Clementine has been searching for news regarding the red caltrop diamond. Then, should I...”

After hesitating momentarily, her eyes grew determined. She immediately left her residence and headed towards the top of the Radiant Temple.

“Let her in.”

Within the vast, wide Radiant Temple’s uppermost floor, Clementine was silently seated on his throne, his eyes closed. His divine sense was constantly extended, but of course, there was no way he could compare to Linley. Normally, by relying on his spiritual energy, he was able to just barely cover the Fogdeep continent.

Even Paragons wouldn’t be so wasteful as to constantly use Sovereign’s Might.

If he did do that, most likely in a single month, he would have used up an astronomical amount of Sovereign’s Might.

“Milord.” The Radiant Goddess walked in, her feet unclad.

“What is it?” Clementine opened his eyes.

Clementine’s stare made the Radiant Goddess feel as though she were a tiny boat in the midst of a wild storm, about to capsize at any moment. The Radiant Goddess trembled slightly, then said respectfully, “Milord, you are searching for a red caltrop diamond. Your subordinate remembers that a friend once told me...if many powerful Deities come in search of a treasure, I am to give this to one of the experts. He

said...this is a gift for me. That friend of mine was named Brodie!” As she spoke, she produced a small red box.

In that instant...

A divine light flashed in Clementine’s eyes. He immediately spread out his divine sense, wanting to wrap it around the surrounding area and forbid other Paragons from using their divine sense to search this area.

But it was too late!

Four divine senses instantly swept over that box.

“Haha, Clementine, we have to thank you, haha...” A voice rang out in Clementine’s mind.

Clementine’s face grew ugly to behold. He also swept the box with his divine sense, and then, in an instant, with a ‘rumble’, the box transformed into dust. The box in the hands of the Radiant Goddess had been completely crushed, and she couldn’t help but be badly frightened.

“You’ve done well. Now scram.” Clementine snorted coldly.

“Yes.” The Radiant Goddess didn’t dare to say a word. She immediately left.

“Nine Paragons, five in the Fogdeep continent, four in the Beastgod continent. Only three Paragons should have discovered that secret.” Clementine frowned. “Why didn’t Linley keep his divine sense up at all times?” In reality, there had been four divine senses which had swept through the box, but Clementine had only discovered three.

As for Linley’s divine sense? Clementine wasn’t able to detect it at all.

“Linley has few subordinates and doesn’t place much value on keeping up his divine sense. And yet, he thinks to acquire the Overgod talisman?” Clementine let out a cold laugh.

Five of the nine experts knew the secret of the box. Linley naturally knew it.

“The box actually had a piece of paper inside it. The paper only had three words on it; Lion Heart City!” Linley was very puzzled. Linley didn’t question whether the information was real or false, because the paper was a type of paper that was very commonly seen in the Infernal Realm. It could exist for countless years without being damaged. There was no way a material plane could produce this sort of paper.

In addition, the Radiant Goddess didn’t have the courage to lie on purpose.

“Just three words. Can it be that Brodie means to say...the red caltrop diamond is in Lionheart City?” Linley mused to himself.

“Tell me, what sort of a place is Lionheart City?” Linley directly spoke to Elder Shadow of the Bloodknife organization through divine sense.

Elder Shadow immediately replied respectfully, “Lord Baruch, Lionheart City is an extremely famous city in the Beastgod continent. It is the imperial capital of the ‘Snowlion Empire’.

“The Beastgod continent. The imperial capital of the Snowlion Empire?”

Linley’s divine sense covered the entire plane. He immediately noticed that within the Beastgod continent, there was an extremely lavish and large city, with the city gates having two giant words affixed to it. ‘Lion Heart’.

“Boss, what is it?” Bebe didn’t know what was going on.

“Bebe, let’s go on a trip to the Beastgod continent.” Linley smiled slightly, then a surge of wind-type divine power surrounded Bebe. The two transformed into green blurs, instantly disappearing into the horizon.

It wasn’t just Linley who was making haste to the Beastgod continent. The other four Paragons of the Fogdeep continent were also hastening over there.

Paragons flew at a very fast speed. They quickly flew out of the Fogdeep continent, traversed the ocean between the two continents, then arrived within the Beastgod continent. In terms of speed, even without using his ‘fused divine power’, Linley arrived at the Beastgod continent at virtually the same instant that Clementine and the others did.

The four Paragons, Linley, and Bebe entered the Beastgod continent, and as they did, the four Paragons in the Beastgod continent immediately noticed.

“Eh? The five of them all flew over, and to the same location. Can it be that they found out something about the red caltrop diamond?”

As long as one wasn’t a complete idiot, upon seeing this, they would be able to guess that something important must have happened.

They didn’t hesitate at all! The other four Paragons of the Beastgod continent immediately flew towards the gathering spot of the five Paragons who had just entered the continent.

“Clementine, where are you headed?” The Paragon of Water, a middle-aged man with loose blue hair, laughed as he followed Clementine. Although they could guess at where Linley, Clementine, and the other three were headed based on their trajectory, they still weren’t certain about it.

Thus, it was quite natural that the four Paragons based in the Beastgod continent elected to follow after the other five Paragons.

“Hmph.” Clementine couldn’t even be bothered to pay attention to them. His speed suddenly increased, and he began to move slightly faster than the Paragon of Water.

“Everyone, you should all be heading towards Lionheart City, right?” The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, was the first to arrive at Lionheart City. He had been in the Beastgod continent this entire time, and he lived fairly close to Lionheart City. Upon seeing the direction towards which Linley’s group was hurrying towards, as they drew closer, he was easily able to recognize where they were going.

“Swoosh!” A ray of light shot towards Lionheart City, then transformed into a person. It was Clementine.

“Whoosh!” A green blur descended from the skies, then resolved into two figures; Linley and Bebe.

“How did Linley know where to go? Did Dunnington tell him?” Clementine looked at Linley, puzzled. Back then, he had no idea that Linley had used his divine sense.

“Lionheart City!” Linley’s divine sense filled the entire Lionheart City, but he didn’t find anything special.

“Bebe, let’s go in.” Linley sent.

And then, paying no attention to the other Paragons, Linley and Bebe directly entered the city of Lionheart.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 39,

Relief Sculpture

The Okerlund Plane. The Beastgod continent. The imperial capital of the Snowlion Empire – Lionheart City. The imperial palace's garden.

Linley was seated silently in the meditative position in the midst of a flat, green, grassy area. Bebe was by his side. Linley and Bebe both possessed Godrealms, and so could easily distort the rays of light within their area, making it so that the maids and servants within the palace garden were completely unable to see them.

They had spent a full day in Lionheart City, but during this day, Linley's divine sense had been constantly searching at full strength.

Linley opened his eyes.

"Boss, find anything?" Bebe asked hurriedly.

Linley shook his head slightly. "Nothing! The entire imperial capital of Lionheart City has nearly ten million people. Aside for a few youths and a few juvenile beasts which I didn't inspect, I've inspected all of the other living creatures here. But none of them are hiding interspatial rings in their bodies." Brodie had come thirty-plus years ago.

And so, he couldn't have possibly secreted the interspatial ring into these then-unborn young children.

"It really is hard to find." Bebe frowned and snorted. "The other eight Paragons have already ordered their Highgod subordinates to thoroughly search through the entire Lionheart City. But after a long period of time, they have yet to find anything. Those many subordinates of theirs have probably searched the entirety of Lionheart City by now."

Linley nodded slightly.

"Boss, you've already completely searched the ground and the deep seas of the Okerlund Plane. In addition, this is just a material plane; very few people have interspatial rings. Those eight Paragons ordered long ago for every person with an interspatial ring to be searched." Bebe snorted unhappily. "It seems that Brodie really did 'that'."

There were no other possibilities.

The only possibility...was that the red caltrop diamond had been put into an interspatial ring, which was in turn placed within some living creature.

Unfortunately, the population of the Okerlund Plane was simply too great. Eight quadrillion people! And that was just the humans. There were also elves, gnomes, and other races...and the magical beasts that lived in the ground, in the skies, and in the seas were astonishingly numerous as well. In terms of number, in fact, magical beasts vastly outnumbered humans.

Given Linley's spiritual strength, if he were to carefully search in a manner which caused no soul damage, Linley would have to spend an entire day to search just ten million people.

His personal speed was definitely comparable to the speed of hundreds or thousands of ordinary Highgods searching.

Ten million would take Linley a day.

Then eight quadrillion...how long would that take? And that's not even mentioning the magical beasts.

The number was astronomical!

This was why the ten thousand Highgods, eight Paragons, and Linley and Bebe had yet to find the red caltrop diamond despite having spent months. In the Yulan continent, this group would have probably searched everyone within just ten days or so.

"Brodie, that bastard...he definitely chose this Okerlund Plane on purpose." Bebe snorted.

"Be patient. We aren't able to find it, but others also aren't." Linley's divine sense continuously maintained a watch over the entire plane. "Once they do, I will be the first to know as well."

"Right." Bebe said, puzzled, "Boss, then, do you think that the information Brodie left behind for the Radiant Goddess to convey to us...those three words, 'Lion Heart City'...what do you think those words mean? Boss, I have the feeling...that the hiding place of the red caltrop diamond should have something to do with this information."

Linley frowned. "Brodie shouldn't have been so bored as to leave behind some random information to misguide us. The three words, 'Lion Heart City', definitely hold a secret within. And that secret will guide us to the red caltrop diamond's hiding place. But what does 'Lion Heart City' refer to?"

All the experts, Linley included, upon seeing the words 'Lion Heart City', believed that the red caltrop diamond had to be hidden within Lionheart City.

But after investigating it, it seemed off.

"Bebe, let's go. I want to go to the magus libraries of Lionheart City and search through it for information regarding Lionheart City. Perhaps I might discover something." Linley rose to his feet.

"Right. Lionheart City involves these secrets. Perhaps those materials will have information regarding it." Bebe was overjoyed as well.

Linley and Bebe immediately disappeared from within the palace.

As Linley and Bebe were advancing to the 'Lionheart Magus Institute', in a lavish, towering estate within Lionheart City, Clementine was leading his subordinates to set up shop here.

"Milord, we've already searched the entire Lionheart City. No person or magical beast has an interspatial ring within them, much less a red caltrop diamond." A short silver-haired youth bowed and spoke. Those hundreds of Highgods searched quite quickly, but were only comparable to Linley searching by himself.

"You can leave now." Clementine said calmly.

"Yes." The silver-haired youth bowed, then left, leaving behind just Clementine himself within the courtyard.

Linley wasn't the only one pondering. Clementine was pondering as well. "That paper only had three words; 'Lion Heart City'. No other words. What do those words mean?" Clementine's gaze flashed, and he immediately activated his Sovereign's Might!

A powerful divine sense swept out, passing out from the Beastgod continent and stretching deep through the ocean until it encapsulated the entire Fogdeep continent as well.

“Do you know what the meaning of the three words on that paper, ‘Lion Heart City’, refer to?” Clementine sent.

Far away in the distant Fogdeep continent, within the Radiant Temple, the Radiant Goddess felt her heart tremble, and she immediately responded, “Milord, the three words, ‘Lion Heart City’...I am unclear as to the true meaning of those words.”

“How many Lionheart Cities exist in this continent?” Clementine asked.

“Just that imperial capital of the Snowlion Empire of the Beastgod continent.” The Radiant Goddess was completely certain.

“Just one?” Clementine truly did not understand. If there were other Lionheart Cities, perhaps he might go search those places. But now, what was he supposed to do with those three words, ‘Lion Heart City’?

“When Bordie gave that paper to you, did he say anything? Have you told me everything he said in detail?” Clementine said.

“Thirty years ago, when Brodie descended upon the Okerlund Plane, he came with his wife. He once came to my Radiant Sacred Island. Although we were both Gods, he easily defeated me. He lived with me for a time, and when he left, he gave me a gift! He said if many Deities descended on the Okerlund Empire in search of some treasure, I was to hand it to a powerful expert...he said that after the powerful expert acquired the treasure, I would then be rewarded.”

The Radiant Goddess felt extremely resigned.

She had thought that after handing over the paper, she would be praised and rewarded.

But who would have imagined that not only did Clementine not reward her, he even gave her attitude.

Actually, even Brodie himself had no idea...that the ‘red caltrop diamond’ would attract the descent of so many experts, to the point where even eight Paragons and a Paragon-equivalent, Linley, would come! With so many experts, even if she offered up the ‘paper’, the others would notice as well.

If the others hadn’t noticed, perhaps Clementine would have been overjoyed and truly have rewarded the Radiant Goddess.

“After the expert found the treasure, you would thus be rewarded?” Clementine frowned.

From these words, Clementine could deduce...that the red caltrop diamond should truly be in the Okerlund Plane.

“Whoosh.” Clementine withdrew his divine sense from the Fogdeep continent, then gave the order. “Marquis Winter [Wen’tē], come over here.”

Marquis Winter was the owner of this estate. However, when Clementine’s group came, all they had to do was show off the high-level talisman from the Radiant Temple for Marquis Winter to immediately become extremely respectful.

“Milord.” An old man with a head full of silvery white hair, but whose eyes were blue and flashing with life walked over. He saluted respectfully.

“Come with me for a stroll about Lionheart City.” Clementine gave the order. “Take me to some of the interesting areas of Lionheart City.”

“Yes, milord. I know every single special, historical area or building which exists within Lionheart City.” Marquis Winter didn’t know Clementine’s true status; he thought that Clementine was a high level member of the Radiant Temple. But that was already enough for him to be extremely respectful.

The various experts all had their own thoughts. Linley chose to go to the libraries in search of information regarding Lionheart City, while Clementine let this person lead him to view some of the unique sights of Lionheart City. Although his divine sense was able to cover Lionheart City, with no one to explain for him, even if he found a ‘rock’ that had existed for countless ages, he wouldn’t know that there was any special meaning to that rock.

Under the guidance of Marquis Winter, Clementine learned quite a bit about the classical history of Lionheart City.

At this moment, Clementine and Marquis Winter were located within a history museum. This museum’s exhibition hall walls had enormous relief sculptures on them. These relief sculptures were almost all at the same height on the wall. The wide halls only had a few dozen figures located sparsely within them.

“Milord, look.” Marquis Winter laughed as he pointed at a relief sculpture up ahead. “The nineteen people in this sculpture are our Snowlion Empire’s Founding Emperor, ‘Venna’ [Wen’na], and his most loyal eighteen knights. Even the weakest of these eighteen knights had reached the ninth level, while our Founding Emperor, Wenna, was a Saint-level expert.”

Clementine just nodded slightly.

Ninth rank? Saint? To a supreme Deity like Clementine, there was no difference.

“Milord, look at this carving.” Marquis Winter pointed while speaking to a giant carving next to them. This carving was of an enormous, mono-horned lion-type magical beast. In the carving, this enormous lion-type magical beast had a large wound on its lower body. A person was currently flying out from this wound, and that figure was holding something in its hands.

The sculpture had captured that moment.

“Oh, rather interesting.” Clementine, upon seeing this sculpture, couldn’t help but chuckle.

“Milord, this sculpture describes the greatest danger our Founding Emperor Venna faced; this was also the battle that led to Emperor Venna’s rise to fame!” Marquis Winter said hurriedly. “And this battle occurred at the old location of Lionheart City. It was precisely because he wanted to commemorate that battle that Emperor Venna ordered this imperial capital and named it ‘Lionheart City’. This is where Lionheart City came from.”

“Where Lionheart City came from?” Clementine’s eyes lit up. “Explain in detail!”

Marquis Winter had never seen this ‘high level member of the Radiant Temple’ show so much excitement. He couldn’t help but say hurriedly, “That year, Emperor Venna had just reached the Saint-level. But he encountered the Saint-level magical beast, ‘Silverhorn Snowlion’. That year, Lionheart City was nothing more than a desolate region. Emperor Venna engaged in a fierce battle with the Silverhorn Snowlion! Back then, Emperor Venna was just an early-stage Saint, while generally speaking, magical beasts who reach the Saint level are comparable to late-stage human Saints.”

Clementine nodded slightly.

“Emperor Venna was at a definite disadvantage and close to the point of death. But at the critical moment, with life and death hanging from a thread, Emperor Venna managed to find life from death; he charged straight into the mouth of the Silverhorn Snowlion. He entered the Silverhorn Snowlion’s stomach. None of us know exactly what happened, but what we do know...was that Emperor Venna cut through the Silverhorn

Snowlion's stomach when he escaped. And, in his hand, he was clutching part of the Silverhorn Snowlion's heart when he emerged. Clearly, he had already shattered the Silverhorn Snowlion's heart...but of course, the Silverhorn Snowlion died as well." Marquis Winter explained in detail. "That battle resulted in Emperor Venna growing much more powerful. He became the most powerful Saint of the entire Beastgod continent."

Clementine's eyes flashed with a complicated look.

"Lionheart City...no wonder it is named Lionheart City." Clementine had a smile on his face, and in his heart, he murmured, "He broke out of the Silverhorn Snowlion's stomach, grabbed its heart, then emerged."

"Let's go back now." Clementine maintained his calm.

"Go back?" Marquis Winter was startled.

Clementine paid him no mind. He pretended as though nothing had happened as he once more returned to Marquis Winter's estate. Only, just an hour after returning to the estate, Clementine himself silently slipped away from Lionheart City!

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 40, The Red Caltrop Diamond Emerges!

Moving as fast as lightning, he instantly pierced through the skies.

Clementine's eyes were filled with wild joy. "Haha, I didn't expect that I would be the first of the nine Paragons to discover it! Lionheart City. So those three words were pointing to a story. Pointing to the fact that the red caltrop diamond was hidden within the body of a Silverhorn Snowlion." Clementine was currently completely certain.

Just then, Clementine had stretched his divine sense out to search all of the Silverhorn Snowlions of the entire plane.

In the Okerlund Plane, there were a total of twelve Silverhorn Snowlions. Aside from two which lived together, the other ten were scattered about. It was naturally easy for him to search those twelve magical beasts. Clementine only needed a moment to completely search the bodies of those twelve Silverhorn Snowlions.

Indeed!

There were three Silverhorn Snowlions who lived in the 'Snowy Icecliff Region' in the northern part of the Beastgod continent. The most powerful and largest of the Silverhorn Snowlions had an interspatial ring in its body!

If he had immediately left upon returning to his estate, the other Paragons would have immediately had questions about where he had just gone. Thus, Clementine had waited an hour. Although this made it so that the other Paragons might notice as well, Clementine was impatient now. In addition, he was completely confident.

"Hmph. By the time those eight react, I should have already arrived at the Snowy Icecliff Region. In addition, in terms of speed, I rank at the front of those nine. I'm the first one to arrive; they won't catch up in time. Once that red caltrop diamond falls into my hands, they can forget about taking it back." Clementine was completely confident.

Paragons of Light specialized in speed!

A ray of light shot straight towards the Snowy Icecliff Region of the Beastgod continent.

Snowlion Empire. Lionheart City. Lionheart Magus Institute. The library.

Tens of thick, heavy tomes were placed on the table. These tens of tomes all described various places and events of Lionheart City. As the imperial capital, there were many, many stories regarding Lionheart City! Some of these books talked about the various heroic figures who had emerged in the countless years of the city's history, as well as some of the legendary secret histories of the imperial palace. They introduced some of the magus institutes and the Founding Emperor...

There was simply too much.

Linley and Bebe had no idea what special meaning was contained within those three simple words, 'Lion Heart City'. Thus, they had no choice but to read through these books. They hoped that while reading one story in particular, they might have a sudden insight and be able to think through the secret.

“Eh?” Linley frowned, and Bebe couldn’t help but look towards Linley.

“Why has Clementine left Lionheart City?” Linley muttered.

“Clementine left Lionheart City?” Bebe stared. “Boss, Lionheart City is linked with the red caltrop diamond. Why has Clementine left?”

“Logically speaking, he shouldn’t.” Linley said with furrowed brows. “Unless...”

“Unless he knows the true secret of the three words, ‘Lion Heart City’. He knows that the red caltrop diamond isn’t within Lionheart City!” Bebe said hurriedly.

“Right. That’s the only explanation.” Linley nodded.

“Boss, are we going to chase after him? If he acquires the red caltrop diamond, what are we to do?” Bebe said frantically.

Linley shook his head and laughed. “Calm down. This isn’t the time to grow impatient yet.”

“This isn’t the time?” Bebe stared.

“Tell me; if we chase after him, even if we catch him, what will Clementine do? He doesn’t have the red caltrop diamond yet. How will we know where to go acquire it, then?” Linley said.

Bebe was startled.

This was indeed true. They didn’t know where the red caltrop diamond was. How would chasing after Clementine change that?

“In addition, Clementine is going north! Even if he acquires the red caltrop diamond, he has to hurry to the Fogdeep continent’s teleportation array. He’ll have to go a long distance. We can intercept him midway.” Linley said. “Clementine doesn’t know my real power. Paragons are believed to be invincible amongst Deities! This is the iron rule...of the past. After acquiring the red caltrop diamond, he will probably head off by himself and take it to the teleportation array.”

If Linley was an ordinary Paragon, then Clementine probably really would have nothing to fear.

“Then we...?” Bebe was startled.

“Sit here and read these books.” Linley said calmly.

“Oh.” Bebe had no choice but to suppress his heart, calming himself.

“Clementine...” Linley’s gaze was dark and icy, with a cold light flashing every so often. Although he looked very calm, how could Linley truly be calm? Doehring Cowart had taught Linley since he was young; he could be said to be Linley’s teacher, but also Linley’s ‘grandfather’. Although his father was important, Linley’s father, ‘Hogg’, hadn’t been with Linley for too long, after all.

But Grandpa Doehring had always accompanied Linley and guided Linley...in Linley’s heart, Grandpa Doehring’s status was definitely comparable to his father’s.

Grandpa Doehring’s death, in particular, was a wound that lingered, deep in Linley’s soul.

Forget about sacrificing one or two divine clones; even at the risk of true death, Linley would want to bring Grandpa Doehring back to life. From this, one could imagine how deeply Linley valued the red caltrop diamond.

“At all costs, I must find the red caltrop diamond...” Linley locked his divine sense onto the distant, flying Clementine. Clementine himself didn’t notice, but he did notice the other seven Paragons paying attention to him. For the sake of avoiding Clementine’s suspicion, Linley would occasionally use Sovereign’s Might to search him as well.

He wanted these Paragons to think that Linley was only occasionally searching.

“Boss, Boss.” Bebe suddenly called out in surprised delight.

“What is it?” Linley was startled.

“Boss, look at this story, quick.” Bebe, excited and surprised, handed over a flipped open book in his hands to Linley. The two pages that were on display even had an inserted image which was of a Silverhorn Snowlion that had its stomach torn open by a human.

Linley swept it with his gaze, instantly reading the complete story.

“Silverhorn Snowlion. Snatching the already shattered heart, then bursting out from the stomach? This is the origin of Lionheart City?” Linley seemed to have been struck by thunder.

Linley’s group had been pondering about which lifeform was hiding the red caltrop diamond within its body. If they searched them all one by one, it would be like searching for a needle in the sea; how long would it take?

But upon seeing this story, most likely quite a few of the Paragons would understand.

Linley and Bebe were shocked as well.

“Silverhorn Snowlions!” Linley’s divine sense instantly spread out to all of the Silverhorn Snowlions in the northern region. Silverhorn Snowlions liked frigid environments, and the northern part of the Beastgod continent, the ‘Snowy Icecliff Region’, had three right there. In an instant, Linley searched the three Silverhorn Snowlions.

One of them had an interspatial ring within its body.

“That’s it!”

Linley rose to his feet, his eyes blazing like fire. “Bebe, let’s go!”

“Let’s go.” Bebe, after seeing the story, could guess at the secret now.

Linley and Bebe immediately disappeared from the library of the magus institute. And then, Linley and Bebe transformed into a ray of green light, rapidly advancing towards the north.

“Linley’s heading out as well? Can it be that they’ve all discovered the secret?”

The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, instantly flew out of Lionheart City as well.

Not just him; the other six Paragons no longer hesitated, immediately flying out of Lionheart City and towards Linley and Clementine.

The three words, ‘Lion Heart City’, involved the secret of the red caltrop diamond. Logically speaking, they shouldn’t be leaving Lionheart City. But after being here just a single day, Clementine had left! This had already aroused the suspicions of the other Paragons. But a short while later, Linley had actually left Lionheart City as well.

Two people had left in succession. This had a major impact on the other seven Paragons.

Thus, everyone hurried to leave.

Linley and Bebe flew at high speed in the air above the Beastgod continent.

“Boss, why aren’t you flying over at top speed?” Bebe said frantically. Linley, even now, was just using wind-type Sovereign power. He didn’t use his fused divine power. Linley’s speed with wind-type Sovereign power was comparable to the speed of the other Paragons.

This was because Linley was hiding his power! But even now, Linley still wanted to hide?

“If my speed increases several times over, they will definitely be surprised and confused. By then, problems will occur.” Linley sent back. “More importantly, Clementine started flying much earlier than I did. He’s already reached the Snowy Icecliff Region. Even if my speed increases several times over, there’s no way I can get there before him and reach that Silverhorn Snowlion first.”

Since he wasn’t able to catch up at maximum speed, it would be best for him to temporarily continue to hide his power.

Linley didn’t expose his power, and so Clementine would definitely continue to believe the myth that ‘Paragons were invincible amongst Deities’. When the time came, Linley would definitely have an opportunity.

If Clementine knew how powerful Linley was, he would definitely be prepared. By then, Linley’s chances for acquiring the red caltrop diamond would be even lower.

“Right now, Clementine has reached the Silverhorn Snowlion.” Linley was rather uneasy, but for the sake of acquiring the red caltrop diamond, he had to calm himself down!

The Snowy Icecliff Region.

This was the coldest part of the Beastgod continent. This region was extremely large, stretching out to ten million kilometers. According to legend, within this Snowy Icecliff Region, there lived the primeval races of ‘Glacier Giants’, ‘Deep Sea Lions’, ‘Silverhorn Snowlions’, and other terrifying ice-attribute Saint-level magical beasts!

There were almost no people here.

Even experts who wanted to train would rarely come here. It was simply too cold.

“Whooooosh.” Snowflakes flew everywhere, and the cold wind howled like knives.

A hill-sized Silverhorn Snowlion was lying in the middle of an enormous cave within a giant glacier. As a supreme magical beast, the area for a hundred kilometers around the Silverhorn Snowlion’s lair didn’t have a single other magical beast present.

“Swish.”

A ray of light shot down from the skies into the cave.

“Hmph...” Two thick streams of white smoke came out from the nostrils of the Silverhorn Snowlion, so thick they seemed like smoky pillars. Its giant silver eyes stare directly at the newcomer...the golden-haired man dressed in loose white robes. Clementine.

“Who are you?” The Silverhorn Snowlion felt that this person was extraordinary.

Clementine smiled, then set up his Godrealm, completely sealing off this location. He also stretched out his Paragon's divine sense. Given this situation, Clementine had made it so that other Paragons wouldn't be able to see through his defense and find out what was going on inside.

"Was there a Deity who once gave you an interspatial ring?" Clementine said. As he said this, Clementine released his aura.

A terrifying presence was released!

The Silverhorn Snowlion's body trembled, and then it went prostrate, its legs buckling. It stared in terror at Clementine, who stood before him. When Clementine had been hiding his aura, that was one thing, but now that he actively released it...the Silverhorn Snowlion felt as though he were an ant in front of a giant.

"Yes. My master once gave me an interspatial ring." The Silverhorn Snowlion said hurriedly. At the same time, he opened his mouth and a slick black interspatial ring shot out from it.

Some magical beasts were able to keep storage items in their bodies.

For example, giant dragons or behemoths all had a location that was akin to a 'storage sac' that was used for transporting items. Generally speaking, items could be stored within. Very few would use interspatial rings, unless they transformed into the form of a human.

"Actually, this interspatial ring isn't of much use to me. If you wish it, milord, I am willing to offer it to you." The Silverhorn Snowlion hurriedly removed the binding. He had never been this terrified before.

The 'presence' in front of him was thousands of times more powerful than that of his former master. The Silverhorn Snowlion even had the feeling...that this person was the endless universe itself, capable of killing him with a thought.

"Then I will take it." Clementine accepted the interspatial ring, immediately binding it with blood, then stretching out his divine sense.

"This..." A look of wild joy crept into Clementine's eyes.

Indeed...

This interspatial ring was almost completely empty. It held only one item...a red caltrop diamond. The red caltrop diamond contained a Life-type aura. Given the strength of Clementine's divine will, he could clearly sense it.

"Haha, I finally succeeded. Hmph, hmph, eight of them fought with me over it, but it's still mine." Clementine smiled, and then with a flicker, his body flew out and headed at high speed towards the Fogdeep continent.

Clementine's usage of his divine sense and Godrealm made it so that the other Paragons weren't able to see what had happened, but Linley had seen everything clearly. That look of wild joy that had appeared on Clementine's face removed all doubt from Linley.

"Whoosh!"

Instantly, the seven Paragons, Linley, and Bebe all changed their flying directions slightly, wanting to intercept Clementine midway.

"Clementine definitely acquired the red caltrop diamond. We must not let him escape." A deep voice rang out in Linley's mind.

“Clementine used his divine sense to block us out, but I’d already searched that Silverhorn Snowlion. The Silverhorn Snowlion did indeed have an interspatial ring in its body, but now...it is gone. It was definitely taken away by Clementine.” Linley sent back to the other seven Paragons. “Everyone, let’s split up and surround him from multiple directions. We definitely can’t let him escape.”

The other Paragons immediately assented.

At this moment, all of them were working in harmony to surround Clementine!

Eight rays of light separated, then slashed through the skies, seeking to prevent that single ray of light.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 41, Two Preparations

As someone who trained in the Laws of Light, Clementine's speed was quite fast, even amongst these Paragons.

“Swoosh!”

Space trembled as a streak of light burst forward.

“Hmph. As expected, the eight of them have come to block me.” Clementine stretched out his divine sense and discovered that Linley and the rest of the eight had moved to block off the path ahead of him. Unless he, Clementine, did not choose to go back through the teleportation array, there was no way for him to avoid the blockade of the eight.

The reason why he only considered the number to be ‘eight’ was because Clementine didn't even take Bebe into consideration.

“What a pity, what a pity. They are simply wasting time by doing this.” Clementine crooked a smile, a hint of delighted amusement on his lips. At the same time, he stretched his divine sense into the mind of one of his Highgod subordinates. “Derry [De'lei], hurry up and inform the Chief Sovereign of Light that I have already acquired the red caltrop diamond.”

“Yes, milord.”

The group of Highgods which Clementine had led over included ones with divine clones still residing in the Divine Light Plane, right next to the Chief Sovereign of Light himself, and were constantly reporting back about the events occurring in the Okerlund Plane.

“At the same time, tell the Chief Sovereign that I am being blocked by eight Paragons, and that the situation is a bit tricky. If I am lucky enough to break through successfully, I will be able to return through the teleportation array. However...if I am unable to escape the eight of them...” Even Clementine wasn't confident that he would be able to successfully escape from eight experts no weaker than him who were blockading him.

“If I'm unable to escape, I will choose to take the red caltrop diamond with me as I enter chaotic space! Inform the Chief Sovereign, and ask him to enter chaotic space early on and make haste to the Okerlund Plane. If I enter chaotic space, I will need the Chief Sovereign to save him.” Clementine sent mentally.

“Yes, milord. I will immediately report this to the Chief Sovereign of Light.” The intelligence agent said hurriedly.

Clementine was prepared for both possibilities; it could be said that this was a flawless plan.

If he could break through, he would; if he couldn't, he would enter chaotic space.

The Chief Sovereign would save him. What had he to fear?

Upon entering chaotic space, even Highgod Paragons would find themselves virtually unable to control their own movements. They would instead be swept away by the endless tides of spatial chaos.

But of course, this was all predicated on the fact that ‘Paragons were invincible amongst Highgods’. If someone was able to easily kill him, he wouldn’t even have the chance to flee. Actually, although Clementine’s strategy was rather simple, it could still be considered flawless. After all, over the course of countless years, it had indeed been true that Paragons were invincible amongst Highgods. Most likely even all the Sovereigns believed this.

“Milord, the Chief Sovereign is very happy. He praised you highly, milord, and he has already entered a spatial rift and is currently in chaotic space, making haste towards the Okerlund Plane. However, from the location in chaotic space of Divine Light Plane to the location of the Okerlund Plane is too far away; even at the Chief Sovereign’s speed, some time is needed.”

“Excellent.” Clementine now felt more assured.

“Everything has been prepared. Now, I’ll accompany the eight of you in playing around for a time. Let’s see if you’ll be able to stop me?” Clementine’s lips curved upwards. He didn’t believe that anybody would be able to take the red caltrop diamond from him.

Linley’s group of eight was flying at high speed.

“Rumble...”

The waves of the sea rolled forward. Linley’s group was currently flying above the seas. Clementine was moving straight towards the Fogdeep continent; naturally, he would have to pass through the ocean. The other Paragons, even if they wanted to go all out, would thus have to stop Clementine above the sea.

“Based on the information that I have, Clementine has a defensive Sovereign artifact.” A cold, fierce voice entered Linley’s mind. “Thus, if we are to act against him, it is best if we use soul attacks! Only, Paragons have very powerful souls. The only way we can kill him is if all eight of us all strike him with soul attacks.”

The speaker was the only female in the group, a Paragon of Lightning.

“Kill him? That will be very hard.” Dunnington’s voice entered everyone’s minds. “As I see it, when the time comes, the faster ones amongst us, being Ballmer, Bayer, Linley, Nanessa [Ne’ne’sha], will go slow him down. Don’t let him escape. As long as he can’t escape, once he faces our group attacks, we will have a chance to kill him.”

In recorded history, there had been instances of Paragons being killed by Sovereigns.

However, there had never been a case where a group of Paragons killed a single Paragon. It wasn’t that it was impossible; rather, the chances of a large group of Paragons to come to the same spot and join forces was simply too slow.

“Our goal isn’t to kill him.” That cold voice rang out. “Just to force Clementine to hand over the red caltrop diamond.”

“Once it is handed over, who will take it?” Bayer’s voice rang out.

The discussion through divine sense of this group of Paragons instantly ground to a halt.

Right. If Clementine were to hand over the red caltrop diamond, who would it go to?

“It’s far too early to be discussing this.” Linley sent to the other seven Paragons. “Do you all think that it will be easy for us to acquire the red caltrop diamond from Clementine? Hmph. Let’s think about how we can force him to hand it over. As for who will acquire it, as I see it, nobody will want to give it up, right? When the time comes, it’ll be based on who has the ability to take it.”

“Right. It will be based on who has the ability to take it.”

None of the Paragons were willing to submit to each other; only by relying on ability could one acquire the red caltrop diamond, then flee past the others. Only then would the other Paragons be convinced.

“Boss, you feel confident now?” Bebe sent with worry. “Just now, they were saying that Clementine has a defensive Sovereign artifact.”

“Ninety percent confident.” Linley’s gaze was sharp as he stared into the distance. “He’s about to arrive.”

Both Linley’s side and Clementine were travelling at high speed.

In the fact of a blockade by these eight great experts, even though Clementine might want to avoid them, there was no way he would be able to.

“Clementine has arrived.” The cold, sharp voice said. “Let’s just do as Dunnington suggested earlier. I, Ballmer, Bayer, and Linley will be responsible for entangling him and preventing him from escaping. And then, everyone will jointly use soul attacks against him. Hmph, he’s by himself. For him to endure the soul attacks of eight Paragons...probably even he won’t be able to endure it.”

“Bebe, just watch here for now.” Linley sent mentally.

“Right.” Bebe understood that for a battle at this level, if he got involved, he would just be dead weight.

Without hesitating at all, Linley’s group of eight shot out like eight bolts of lightning, forming a net as they shot towards that distant ray of light.

“Clementine...” Linley’s gaze was firmly focused on that distant ray of light. Suddenly, that ray of light distorted, wanting to dodge past Linley’s group.

“In your dreams!”

Linley, Paragon of Fire Ballmer, Paragon of Wind Bayer, and Paragon of Lightning Nanessa suddenly accelerated. The four of them were not slower than Clementine, and as they did a four-way pincer towards him, they easily made it so that there was nowhere Clementine could run to avoid them.

“Clementine, you won’t be able to escape.” Ballmer’s voice rang out in Clementine’s mind.

“Haha, you want to stop me? Keep dreaming!” Clementine knew that there was no way for him to dodge them, but suddenly charged at high speed towards Bayer.

Bayer, as a Paragon of Wind, was most powerful in material attacks, while a bit lacking in soul attacks. As for Clementine, he had a protective Sovereign artifact and so didn’t fear Bayer at all.

“HE wants to flee from my side?” Bayer’s face turned cold.

“Whoosh.”

Suddenly, a wild wind howled and Bayer instantly transformed into a dense cluster of thousands of Bayers. This was the ‘Doppelganger’ technique of the Laws of the Wind. The strange thing is, the many doppelgangers actually generated strange tornados, with the dense cluster of tornados actually not causing any spatial vibrations at all.

Linley, seeing this, was secretly surprised.

“Thousands of doppelgangers, joining forces to execute the ‘Dimensional Wind’ technique. This is truly inconceivable.” Linley sighed in praise.

Logically speaking, only the true body should be able to use profound mysteries. But Bayer had clearly developed a technique to make it so that all of his doppelgangers would also have access to this technique. In addition, it had a special effect akin to a ‘magical formation’, making the effects of this ‘Dimensional Wind’ technique be layered atop each other, completely locking in the surrounding space.

A terrifying restrictive, pulling power instantly enveloped Clementine!

“Bayer actually has a technique like this?” Clementine couldn’t help but feel frantic.

Even though the profound mysteries of the Laws were the same, the attacks one could develop weren’t necessarily the same. After gaining insight into the profound mysteries, one still had to develop the best method for applying them. Bayer’s technique was a fairly clever way of applying the profound mysteries.

“Right at this moment. Soul attacks!” Dunnington’s voice rang out in the minds of everyone, including Linley.

Instantly, the eight people, including Linley, launched soul attacks without hesitating at all.

“Not good.” Clementine’s face changed dramatically.

“Bang!” Clementine’s body suddenly exploded with thousands of rays of golden light, forming a dense cluster of many Clementines. The ‘Doppelganger’ type technique was available to the Laws of the Wind, the Laws of Darkness, and the Laws of Light as well. But of course, the principle behind each was slightly different.

For now, Linley’s group of eight was unable to immediately determine which one was the true body.

Although everyone knew that Clementine’s original body wouldn’t be able to flee too far, and that it was within a few meters of the original location, within those few meters, there were five Clementines!

“Hmph!”

The only woman in this battle, the Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa, stretched her hands out. Instantly, within the surrounding area of ten thousand meters, thousands of bolts of lightning appeared out of nowhere. The wild, savage thunderbolts struck down with abandon. Instantly, virtually all of the doppelgangers which Clementine had created had all been destroyed, leaving behind only a single Clementine.

“Stay your hands.” Clementine shouted loudly as he flew backwards, wanting to pull away from Linley’s group.

“Attack.” There was no hesitation at all; as Dunnington gave the order, the eight of them all unleashed their soul attacks.

Eight rays of translucent soul attacks shot through the skies, attacking towards Clementine. Soul attacks were always terrifyingly fast to begin with. Ordinary Highgods would be completely unable to dodge, but the speed of Paragons was far faster than the speed of Highgods, after all. Even in the face of these impending soul attacks, he was still able to dodge slightly.

Clementine’s body suddenly twisted.

He managed to dodge six full soul attacks, but two of them still sunk into his body.

“Hmph.” The color of Clementine’s face changed slightly.

“Continue.” Dunnington didn’t hesitate at all.

“Stay your hands. If you keep attacking, I will destroy this interspatial ring.” Clementine’s voice instantly echoed in the minds of the eight. At the same time, an interspatial ring appeared within Clementine’s hands.

The eyes of Linley’s group of eight lit up, and they couldn’t help but halt.

“Clementine, this red caltrop diamond isn’t for you to have. Just hand it over.” The Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, snickered.

“Hmph.” The Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa, stared coldly towards Clementine with her violet eyes.

“Hand it over, Clementine.” Linley stared at him.

Clementine swept the eight of them with his gaze, then snickered, “I really didn’t expect that today’s events would occur. If I had known, I would’ve gone to the Planar Battlefield and earned a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.” A Paragon suffer joint attacks from a group of Paragons? This had never happened before.

The Paragons had never anticipated a day like today, and so aside from a minority of Paragons who did go and acquire three Sovereign artifacts, the vast majority of Paragons either had no Sovereign artifacts or just one.

After all...

Whether or not they had Sovereign artifacts made very little difference to them. Only when they suffered an attack from a group of Paragons would a Sovereign artifact prove its usefulness.

“The eight of you really are quite vicious. It is just an Overgod talisman, right? Why fight to the death like this.” Clementine rubbed his nose, then snickered, “The reason the nine of us have come for this Overgod talisman is to give our Sovereign some face, and to acquire just a bit of Sovereign’s Might. Why fight to this extent?”

Indeed, the Overgod talisman, to Highgod Paragons, didn’t have that much use. It wasn’t worth them fighting for their lives over it.

However, not worth fighting for their lives was only true if their own lives were on the lines. The Paragons wouldn’t mind taking someone else’s life for it.

“Since you’ve said that, you should hand the red caltrop diamond over.” Dunnington said.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 42, Linley's Terrifying Strength

Linley stared coldly at Clementine.

Despite being faced with a group of eight experts who were attacking him, Clementine was still all smiles.

“If you want this red caltrop diamond, we can discuss it.” Clementine said with a laugh. “However, I must tell you, I have already informed the Chief Sovereign of Light that I have it. If you do this, you will be offending the Chief Sovereign. Consider this carefully.”

“What a joke.” Dunnington laughed coldly. “Offend the Chief Sovereign of Light? Everyone competed for the red caltrop diamond fairly. If just by fighting over it, the Chief Sovereign of Light will be offended, then you taking it for yourself will be offending the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, the Chief Sovereign of Life, and the other Chief Sovereigns!” Which of these Paragons didn't have a powerful backer?

Perhaps only Linley was here on his own.

Actually, as the other Paragons viewed it, behind Linley was the Chief Sovereign of Destruction of the Infernal Realm.

“Stop wasting time.” Bayer laughed coldly.

Clementine's face sank. He swept the eight with his gaze, then laughed coldly. “Fine. You want this red caltrop diamond, right? However, how will the eight of you divide it up? I am quite interested in this.”

“Don't worry about that.” Dunnington's face sank.

“Everyone, prepare to attack.” Linley said.

Clementine's face instantly turned cold. He suddenly swung his hand and threw the interspatial ring out, using so much force that it transformed into a blur and flew into the horizon.

“Did he really hand it over?” Linley was startled. This was beyond his expectations. “Or perhaps...the interspatial ring he threw out was fake?” Linley was suspicious, but despite that, he would still go check it out!”

“The red caltrop diamond!”

The eight, Linley included, all charged together, but Linley's divine sense was activated at all times, and so he clearly noticed that Clementine suddenly charged at high speed towards the Fogdeep continent.

A deep voice rang out. “This interspatial ring isn't necessarily real. Everyone, don't let Clementine escape. Let's stop him first.”

But although they said that, who would actually go stop him?

If someone went to stop him, the others would definitely acquire the interspatial ring. After all...Linley's group of eight wasn't truly a cohesive group. Everyone wanted to acquire the red caltrop diamond. This made it so that although everyone knew that Clementine was fleeing, nobody went to stop him.

Everyone went to try and acquire the interspatial ring which Clementine had thrown out.

The closest and fastest were Linley and Bayer. They charged to the front and were about to acquire the interspatial ring. Up till now, Linley still had yet to reveal his true strength.

“Swoosh!” A surge of terrifyingly powerful energy swept towards Linley, and Linley’s speed couldn’t help but slow down.

“Hmph.” Linley willed it, and with a ‘whap’, behind Linley, a two meter long metallic, whip-like draconic tail suddenly emerged. After the transformation, Linley’s draconic tail and scales were now an inky jade color. Under Linley’s control, that draconic tail suddenly extended to nearly four meters long, and as it whipped out...

“Swoosh!” Space was cut through like parchment by a knife, and a very neat spatial rift was created.

“Bang!” Bayer wasn’t able to dodge in time. Struck by the draconic tail, he was knocked flying. Not just him; even the Paragon chasing behind them, ‘Nanessa’, was also knocked aside by Linley’s draconic tail.

Linley stretched his hand over the interspatial ring, and in the same instant, sent a drop of blood into it.

“The interspatial ring...the red caltrop diamond...” Linley couldn’t help but tremble from excitement.

“Everyone, join forces and attack Linley.” Bayer instantly sent to the other Paragons.

Linley’s divine sense instantly swept through the interspatial ring. The insides of it were completely empty; forget about the red caltrop diamond, there wasn’t even a rock inside. Linley’s heart sank, and a surge of rage began to build in his chest. “So this Clementine really wasn’t willing to hand over the red caltrop diamond.”

The other Paragons were preparing to attack Linley.

“This ring is fake!” Linley sent furiously to the others. “We’ve been swindled by Clementine!”

“What?”

The faces of the other seven Paragons changed dramatically. They all had thought of this possibility, but when it really played out, all of them grew furious. Eight Paragons had been deceived at one go. How could they not be enraged?

Everyone had thought of this possibility, and someone had even spoken out to urge them to block Clementine.

But...everyone wanted someone else to do the blocking, while they would go seize the interspatial ring.

Their disunity made it so that Clementine was now able to pull away from them.

“Capture him!” The Paragon of Earth, the big fellow who was four meters tall, bellowed furiously.

The eight, Linley included, charged straight for Clementine.

“Haha, only now did you want to try and capture me? Haha, too late.” Clementine’s voice. It echoed within the minds of Dunnington, Ballmer, Linley, and the rest of the eight. “It really is as I expected; this is the result of your disunity. I just played a simple trick, and all of you were fooled.”

Dunnington, Bayer, and the others had ugly looks on their faces.

Actually, everyone realized that the ring was probably fake, but none of them could resist fighting over it.

“To capture him now is difficult.” A cold voice rang out in the minds of Linley and the others. The speaker was the Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa. “Although we only spent a few moments trying to acquire that interspatial ring, Clementine has already flown more than a hundred thousand kilometers away. Of the eight of us, only four of us are as fast as Clementine, or at most slightly faster. But the distance is too great. It is impossible to catch up.”

Nanessa was quite dispirited.

The other Paragons felt helpless as well. Although they didn’t want to accept it, it was true.

“Haha, I thought I’d have to use a second trick. It seems that is unnecessary. Everyone, thank you for showing mercy and allowing me to acquire the red caltrop diamond.” Clementine sent with intentional mockery.

Quite a few Paragons began to slow down.

Clearly, they had given up.

“I’m not chasing. I won’t be able to catch him.” Dunnington gave up as well.

Linley stared up ahead, his gaze sharp.

“It’s about time.” Linley suddenly willed it, and the wind-type Sovereign power coursing through his body was instantly retracted into his sea of consciousness. And then, Linley activated his fused divine power! The four types of divine power fused into that black divine power, causing Linley’s energy to increase dramatically. Linley then accelerated just slightly...

“Bang!”

Space itself trembled as Linley’s speed increased explosively!

His speed had increased by roughly 30%.

Actually, by relying on the ‘fused divine power’ that was ten times more effective than Sovereign power, Linley’s speed could increase several times over. But Linley understood something. “If I were to suddenly increase his speed several times over, Clementine would probably be so terrified that he wouldn’t dare do battle. He would go straight into chaotic space. That would be terrible. I’ve only increased my speed by 30% or so. He wouldn’t actually be frightened...and this speed is enough to catch him.”

Linley’s original speed was already quite terrifying. After a 30% increase?

To make a difference of a hundred thousand kilometers after a 30% increase in speed was simply too easy.

“Catch me? In their dreams?” Clementine, fleeing in the distance with a smug feeling, suddenly had a changed look on his face. His divine sense had realized that Linley had suddenly broken away from the other seven Paragons and was advancing towards him at high speed. “How can this be? How can he be so fast? Can it be that he had been hiding his power?”

The other seven Paragons were shocked as well.

“How can this Linley be so fast?” Dunnington stared, stupefied.

“This speed...it is even close to thirty percent faster than mine.” The Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa, had a stunned look in her eyes as well.

“He just increased in speed by that much! There is still a distance of more than a hundred million kilometers from here to the Fogdeep continent’s teleportation array. They are only a hundred thousand kilometers away from each other. He’ll catch up in an instant.” Bayer frowned as well. Linley’s speed had stunned him.

This group of Paragons had no idea that Linley had only revealed a hint of his true power. This was because Linley didn’t want to scare Clementine into fleeing into chaotic space.

“So what if he is just a bit faster? By himself, he won’t be able to stop me.” Clementine then calmed down.

He had a defensive Sovereign artifact. As he saw it, Linley’s material attacks shouldn’t be able to harm him.

As for soul attacks?

Generally speaking, unless the difference was large, it wouldn’t be able to kill an enemy.

“His soul attacks definitely aren’t as strong as mine. Even if they were slightly stronger, he wouldn’t be able to harm me; he’s just a bit faster. It makes sense. He is a member of the Four Divine Beasts clan; it only makes sense that he’s a bit special.” Clementine felt very confident. Just now, he had suffered two soul attacks from Paragons, yet endured it; why would he fear Linley?”

Unless it was necessary, he wouldn’t choose to enter chaotic space.

If he did, he would have to suffer for some time as well.

“Clementine, you won’t be able to escape.” Linley had already caught up, and he could now see Clementine within his field of vision.

“Linley, I admit that you are quite fast, but do you think that by yourself, you will be able to stop me?” Clementine chuckled.

Linley just stared silently at Clementine as he drew closer and closer to Clementine. A thousand meters. Five hundred meters. A hundred meters...

Suddenly...

“Bang!”

In that instant, Linley’s speed suddenly tripled! On top of the earlier 30% increase in speed, it increased threefold more!

Threefold!!!

“Impossible!” The seven Paragons were watching this from afar through divine sense. Five of them even cried out involuntarily in shock, while the other two just stared with looks of amazement in their wide eyes! It had been countless years since something was capable of causing these Highgod Paragons to feel amazed.

But Linley’s speed had increased threefold more. This was on a completely different level from Paragons!

To be moving at such high speed definitely required that a person’s energy and body were both far stronger than a Paragon’s!

From ancient days till now, everyone believed that Paragons were the highest level of existence amongst Highgods. But Linley was definitely on a level stronger than even Paragons. What was this about?!

“Impossible!!!” Clementine’s eyes were filled with amazement as well.

Right at this moment...

“BANG!” He wasn’t able to react at all before a fist came smashing towards his face!

Clementine’s defensive Sovereign artifact trembled violently. It wasn’t damaged, but Clementine’s skull was actually fractured, and the flesh on his face was split open, causing fresh blood to flow out. Clementine just felt his head grow dizzy. In this instant, he was completely dazed!

Not just him; the seven Paragons watching from afar were dazed as well!

To be able to harm him even through a defensive Sovereign artifact...what sort of an attack was this?

In the past, in the Indigo Prefecture of the Infernal Realm, when the eight great clans had attacked the Four Divine Beasts clan, Beirut had appeared and, wielding his Sovereign longstaff, devastated the experts of the eight great clans. The Patriarchs of the eight great clans had defensive Sovereign artifacts, but were still heavily injured by Beirut’s staff blows, to the point of vomiting blood.

Having a defensive Sovereign artifact didn’t symbolize that someone would be invincible!

Imagine a child holding a steel shield, while an adult wielding an iron mace smashed hard against the shield. Even though the shield wouldn’t be damaged at all, and although the shield would ablate most of the force, the remainder of the force would still cause the child to be injured.

It was the same principle!

If there was a twofold, threefold, or even fourfold difference in strength, there were no problems at all if one relied on a defensive Sovereign artifact.

But of course, there was a prerequisite.

That was that the attacker also had a powerful weapon. For example, Beirut; when he injured the Patriarchs of the eight great clans, he was able to do so because he had a Sovereign weapon! He had a Sovereign weapon, and given how strong he himself was, he was definitely more than ten times as strong as his enemies, which was why he was able to badly injure them. If Beirut used all of his strength, he would’ve even been able to kill them!

But if he hadn’t had a Sovereign weapon, things would have been troublesome.

Although his attack power was great, if his weapon was ordinary, given the powerful collision that would’ve resulted, his weapon would’ve been destroyed.

However, after undergoing the transformation from the four fused divine powers, Linley’s fists and kicks were comparable to Sovereign weapons!

“How...how can this be?” Clementine’s eyes were filled with shock. And then, he stared hard at Linley. “You...you...how can...?”

“Hmph, Clementine, just now, I didn’t use full force.” Linley said coldly. And then, his body suddenly began to sprout inky jade draconic scales. Those inky jade spikes emerged as well. Linley instantly went into full Dragonform, then stared hard at Clementine. “Just now, I was able to heavily wound you through the Sovereign artifact. But now, I am able to kill you! You should understand by now.”

For the current Linley, even without Dragonforming, he vastly surpassed his former strength in Dragonform, prior to fusing the four divine powers.

Using his fused divine power was more than ten times more effective than using Sovereign power.

This made it so that the even non-Dragonformed Linley was more than ten times as powerful as an ordinary Paragon.

But now, Linley was in Dragonform! His strength once more skyrocketed. His punches contained the power of Will; they were absolutely on the Sovereign weapon level!

“No...how can this be?” Clementine was stupefied.

The other spectating Paragons were completely stunned as well.

How could the world have an expert who was vastly stronger than a Paragon? Paragons were invincible amongst Deities. This was an iron rule!

Unfortunately, they didn't realize...that this so-called iron rule was only true in the past. A hitherto unseen quadruple soul mutation had been successful, which had changed everything! A Soul Mutate who had four divine clones had never been seen before. After succeeding, Linley's Will became far more powerful than that of the Will of a Paragon.

This symbolized...that Linley would definitely be stronger than Paragons!

For him to have a powerful Will was one thing, but what was even more terrifying was that after the four types of divine power fused, they actually changed Linley's body, making it so that it, too, reached the Sovereign weapon level. This terrifying body, combined with his terrifying Will, and the fused divine power that vastly outstripped Sovereign power...

All these things guaranteed that Linley would vastly outstrip any Highgod Paragon!

Prior to fusing four types of divine power, Linley was comparable to Highgod Paragons. After fusing them...Linley was far beyond them!

“My body has divine clones hiding within it, so I admit that yes, after Dragonforming, you have the power to kill me. But that's just my original body. I can use my divine clones to shatter this interspatial ring.” Clementine said hurriedly. “If you kill me, you'll acquire neither the interspatial ring nor the red caltrop diamond.”

“That is precisely why, just now, I didn't try to kill you.” Linley said calmly.

His true power was tens of times greater than that of his opponent, and his body was comparable to a Sovereign weapon. Linley was able to kill his opponent, even through a Sovereign artifact. At most, though, he would be able to kill the original body; the divine clone hidden within it wouldn't die instantly. The divine clone absolutely could crush the interspatial ring.

“Clementine, it is just a red caltrop diamond. I imagine that you wouldn't be willing to give up your life for the sake of a red caltrop diamond.” Linley said calmly. “Even if we acquire the red caltrop diamond, we'll simply offer it to a Sovereign and at most gain some Sovereign's Might. It isn't that useful.”

Clementine nodded.

“Your life. Your everything. Compared to a red caltrop diamond that can only be used to trade for some Sovereign's Might. Which one is more valuable? I imagine that you know what choice to make.” Linley laughed calmly. “Also. Don't even think about entering chaotic space. Even if you charge in, I'll follow you in and instantly kill you.”

Earlier, Linley said that he had a 90% confidence because...

Linley believed that unless Clementine went mad, he wouldn't be willing to, for the sake of a red caltrop diamond that he would simply exchange for some Sovereign's Might, give up his Paragon clone!

"Fine, you win." Clementine let out a sour laugh. "I'm not going to give up my life for this bauble. Only, I want to ask you. Are you...a Highgod Paragon?"

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 43, Utterly Exasperated

“Are you...a Highgod Paragon?”

This question was something which puzzled not only Clementine. Even the seven distant Highgod Paragons who were flying over were filled with shock and disbelief! Linley, even without Dragonforming, had actually been able to harm Clementine through a Sovereign artifact.

What sort of power was this?

It was definitely a power gap of more than ten times! To be more than ten times more powerful than a Paragon? Aside from Sovereigns, could someone else be capable of this? In addition, this was when he wasn't in Dragonform. If he did Dragonform, how much stronger would Linley be, compared to a Paragon? Linley's very existence was completely inconceivable.

“Paragon?” Linley raised an eyebrow.

“Can it be...that you've made another breakthrough? Can it be that after we become Paragons, we can make further breakthroughs?” Clementine asked hurriedly. The Overgod talismans weren't that enticing to Paragons; after becoming a Paragon, they had lost all motivation, as they believed that they had reached the very pinnacle. Some lived leisurely lives, others secluded themselves, while still others controlled a side of their own.

But upon seeing Linley, these Paragons discovered that apparently it was possible to continue to increase in strength!

Instantly, their hearts began to blaze once more!

“No. Can it be that just because I'm also a Paragon, I can't possibly be tens of times or a hundred times stronger than you?” Linley laughed calmly.

“Uh...” Clementine was stunned. “You...is it because of your body?”

“Yes. I am a Paragon, but my body is far more powerful than yours! My body is comparable to a Sovereign artifact.” Linley smiled. Even now, Linley wasn't prepared to publicize his secret.

“This...a body comparable to a Sovereign artifact? That's completely...how can that be?!”

Clementine now completely understood!

Paragons who both used Sovereign power should, logically speaking, be equivalent. But Linley's body was comparable to a Sovereign artifact in power; such a physically powerful body made it so that Linley's attacks were tens of times, or nearly a hundred times, more powerful than an ordinary Paragon's!

“Why can't it be possible? Hemmers, even though he isn't a Paragon, is too naturally talented. His material attacks are already comparable to a Paragon's. You tell me; if he became a Paragon and possessed the power of Will, wouldn't his material attacks vastly surpass yours?” Linley laughed calmly.

Given how powerful Hemmers was before becoming a Paragon, if he became a Paragon, Hemmers would definitely surpass the others.

“I understand now.” Clementine let out a long sigh.

“Linley, you are now the most powerful person who has ever existed, aside from the Sovereigns.” Clementine looked at Linley with a complicated look in his eyes.

Clementine understood what Linley was saying. Not one of the other Paragons had a body comparable to a Sovereign artifact.

It must be understood that in all of history, throughout all the planes of the multiverse, there were less than ten people whose bodies were comparable to Sovereign artifacts in strength! Hemmers could just barely be considered one, while Beirut was another...there were less than ten in the entire multiverse. For one of those rare, blessed individuals to also become a Paragon? Was that likely?

The number of living creatures of various races that had existed throughout all of the planes and all of history was an astronomical, unthinkable number. And yet, only twenty-plus Paragons had ever emerged.

The chances were simply too low! It could be said that the chances were virtually nil.

There were less than ten or so figures like Hemmers or Beirut. For one of them to become a Paragon wasn't very practical.

Actually, according to the way the natural laws of the universe worked, for those who were too innately gifted, it would be extremely difficult for them to train. Forget about Beirut and Hemmers; not even the ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan had become Paragons.

The heavens were just!

If Linley had developed normally, there was no way he could have become this powerful, nor could he have acquired a body comparable to a Sovereign artifact!

However, despite having four divine clones, his soul mutation had been a success!

Linley's tough, powerful body wasn't given to him at birth; it was created by that fused divine power!

Ever since his four-way soul mutation had been a success, it was virtually guaranteed that a miracle would take place!

Linley had 'fused divine power' and 'Will', both of which vastly surpassed that which was available to a Highgod. This made up for Linley's deficiencies in the mysteries, making him comparable to a Paragon. But his body, as strong as a Sovereign artifact, made him vastly surpass them.

“Clementine, you've asked your questions. Now, give me the red caltrop diamond.” Linley stared at Clementine.

“I wanted to offer it to the Chief Sovereign. Forget it.” Clementine waved his hand, and a red caltrop diamond appeared within it. Holding the red caltrop diamond, Clementine laughed as he looked at Linley. “This red caltrop diamond does indeed have a type of unique energy that nourishes the soul. However, to us Paragons, it is useless.”

Clementine casually tossed the red caltrop diamond towards Linley.

A treasure had varying levels of effects on varying levels of people.

If an ordinary mortal were to hold the red caltrop diamond, it would probably cause his soul to quickly become as powerful as the soul of a Saint.

If a God held it, he would also feel his soul change, and he, a God, would even be able to kill an ordinary Highgod. But if a Highgod were to hold it, the soul would no longer strength.

The true was same for its released power. The more powerful a person was, the less effective it would be.

The red caltrop diamond was only a talisman, after all. It wasn't an Overgod artifact. Although it had unusual effects, it wasn't an invincible treasure.

Brodie, when holding it, could kill Six Star Fiends.

But Morde, when in possession of the nine soul pearls, was nearly finished when facing a Linley who had yet to make his four-way fusion of divine power.

To him, the increase in strength was already quite limited.

To Paragons, in terms of both body and soul, after they acquired the power of Will, they had already reached a limit amongst Deities. Even if they held the red caltrop diamond or the nine soul pearls, it would at most increase their power by ten or twenty percent. Their regenerative power might increase twofold or threefold, but against someone who was tens of times stronger, it was useless.

"The regenerative effect, as far as Paragons are concerned, is negligible." Linley stretched his hand out and accepted the tossed red caltrop diamond. A surge of warm energy filled Linley's body and soul. It was a feeling akin to the feeling he had when he held the nine soul pearls. This sort of nurturing power, to a soul as strong as Linley's, had no effect at all.

On the surface, Linley looked calm. But in his heart, he was so excited that he was quivering.

"The red caltrop diamond. This is definitely the red caltrop diamond!" Linley wildly celebrated mentally. "Three talismans. I finally have them all!"

In his mind, Linley could still clearly remember those scenes from his youth. That day, a blurry light had flown out from the Coiling Dragon ring, transforming into an amiable, kind old man with a moon-white robe and a white beard. "Hello, kiddo. My name is Doebling Cowart. I am a Saint-level Grand Magus of the Pouant Empire!"

From that day onwards, his destiny had changed.

Linley would never forget how Grandpa Doebling had consumed up his own soul to execute a forbidden magic spell to save Linley. That was the most painful event Linley had ever been through.

"Grandpa Doebling...soon, I'll be able to see you again." Linley said quietly to himself.

Excited, Linley wanted to immediately let the three talismans become one, and to let the Crown of Life summon the Overgod of Life. But Linley didn't let his joy cloud his mind. "This isn't yet the time for fusing the three talismans. If I summon the Overgod of Life now, the Sovereigns will immediately know that I have the three talismans. That will be disastrous!"

If Sovereigns knew that Linley, a Deity, had three talismans...what would the repercussions be?

Linley didn't even dare to imagine it.

"Even if the Sovereigns find out that I have an Overgod talisman, a single talisman wouldn't be enough to make a group of Sovereigns go berserk. But if they knew that I had all three of them, the Sovereigns would definitely go wild with rage. Once I return to the Yulan continent, I can then summon the Overgod. Even if the Sovereigns are filled with hate, at worst, I can just remain at the Yulan Plane and never leave again." Linley came to his decision.

Right at this moment...

In the skies above the vast, endless sea, several other figures were flying over at high speed.

Linley glanced at Clementine, then turned back to look. It was the seven Paragons and Bebe. Bebe had been brought along by Dunnington as well.

“Linley. Congratulations.” Loud laughter rang out; the speaker was Dunnington.

“Becoming a Paragon is one thing, but for your body to be so strong that it is comparable to a Sovereign artifact?” That four-meter tall azure-haired fellow’s words held a hint of envy in them. All the other seven Paragons, and even Bebe, had heard the words between Linley and Clementine.

“Linley, as I recall, during the Planar War, your body wasn’t this strong. How can you now...?” The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, stared at Linley.

“One can train one’s body to such a level?” All of the Paragons immediately stared at Linley.

Who didn’t want to strengthen their bodies?

Having a defensive Sovereign artifact only meant one had a powerful ‘shield’. But a body like a Sovereign artifact? That had the power to reverse the rivers and overturn the seas, the terrifying power to rip the heavens asunder.

“I had to experience quite a few things to reach this level.” Linley gave a very ‘unclear’ answer as a response.

The other Paragons looked at each other, not wanting to ask anything further.

“Everyone, you don’t still want to fight over this red caltrop diamond with me, do you?” Linley said with a smirk.

“Fight with you? Do we look like we want to die?” The Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa, still spoke with a cold voice, but a hint of laughter was in her eyes. “I don’t have a defensive Sovereign artifact, unlike Clementine. You need to Dragonform to kill him, but against me, you wouldn’t even need to Dragonform.”

“Forget it. After seeing your speed, Linley, and your attack power, I immediately understood that we don’t have any chance of acquiring the red caltrop diamond.” Dunnington laughed as well.

This group of Paragons was actually all smiles.

They had only come to fight over the red caltrop diamond at the request of their Sovereigns. If they were going to fight over it, they would go all out. But upon seeing that there was no hope, they naturally gave up. They didn’t feel disappointed or bitter; after all, the Overgod talismans weren’t of much use to Paragons like them.

“Boss, Boss!” Bebe hurriedly flew to Linley’s side, winking towards Linley. “Is it all done? Can we leave, now?”

Linley immediately laughed. “Of course we can go.”

Linley swept the eight Paragons with his gaze, then smiled. “Everyone, the fight over the red caltrop diamond can come to an end now. I don’t want to stay at the Okerlund Plane for much longer, so Bebe and I will leave now.”

Right at this moment...

“Eh?” Linley turned to look.

Above the sea, a surge of terrifying energy began to take form. The colors of the world began to change, and lightning began to ring out. Immediately afterwards, it seemed as though the sun in the sky lost its luster after that terrifying energy began to emit a dazzling light as it slowly condensed into an enormous figure...

That familiar aura...

“The Chief Sovereign of Light!” Linley narrowed his eyes.

“Linley!” A sonorous voice which echoed like thunder rang out. That ten meter tall giant figure appeared, and its appearance was that of the Chief Sovereign of Light. Only, it was larger in size.

“Chief Sovereign.” Linley just smiled as he looked at the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“Sorry, Linley. I had already informed the Chief Sovereign of Light that I was in possession of the red caltrop diamond. After this happened, I had to at least let him know.” Clementine sent apologetically.

“I understand.” Linley understood why Clementine had to do this.

The Chief Sovereign of Light descended, staring icily at Linley. His gaze also swept across the other eight Paragons and Bebe.

The Chief Sovereign of Light was quite furious. Because Clementine wanted to be prepared for all eventualities, the Chief Sovereign of Light had personally travelled through chaotic space from the Divine Light Plane. He had travelled through the vast, endless tides of chaotic space and hastened towards the Okerlund Plane.

Only, although the Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Planes were close to each other, the countless other material planes, despite being close to each other, were in a rather remote area.

For even someone like the Chief Sovereign of Light, he had only managed to travel a tenth of the distance. From this, one could imagine how far the distance was.

The Chief Sovereign of Light had been filled with hope and had been very excited. He hadn't minded how the amount of effort and labor it would take for him to make it over there. But who would have imagined that halfway there, he would receive word of what had just happened; that the red caltrop diamond had been taken by Linley!

If Clementine had never acquired it, that was one thing.

But for Clementine to first acquire it? The Chief Sovereign of Light had been extremely happy, because he had already begun to view the red caltrop diamond as his. Now that it had been seized, of course he was furious. And given that he had already travelled such a great distance in chaotic space, he was even more furious.

“Linley, you...” The Chief Sovereign of Light was about to say something.

“Chief Sovereign.” Linley actually interrupted the Chief Sovereign of Light and asked curiously, “This is a material plane. Can it be that you are planning to block me here, with your weak little planar projection clone?”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 44, Whither To?

The other eight Paragons looked at each other. Then, by unspoken agreement, they moved back some distance, watching amusedly as this played out.

“Why has the Chief Sovereign of Light sent a projection clone over here?” Dunnington sent to the other Paragons.

“He probably isn’t willing to accept the results.” Nanessa sent to the others.

“After I acquired the red caltrop diamond, the Chief Sovereign of Light entered chaotic space and had been hastening here this entire time. He’s probably utterly irritated right now.” Clementine sent back with a smirk.

Although on the surface, the Paragons behaved with courtesy, in their hearts, they still felt disdainful towards some Sovereigns.

Paragons had become Paragons through ability.

Sovereigns? Luck was what mattered in being able to acquire a Sovereign spark. As Paragons saw it, most Sovereigns were just born earlier in the universe and were a bit luckier.

“Everyone, do you think that Linley will trample all over the Chief Sovereign of Light’s projection clone?” The Paragon of Water, the chubby-faced man, sent mentally.

“I don’t think so. Although this is just a projection clone, it’s the projection clone of the Chief Sovereign. If Linley were to do something, he would be giving the Chief Sovereign no face. To end up at loggerheads against a Chief Sovereign isn’t good.” The Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, sent back.

The Chief Sovereign of Light’s Sovereign body wasn’t able to enter the Okerlund Plane as well. This was just a planar projection clone. Planar projection clones contained just the barest wisp of the mind of the Sovereign. Projection clones were simply created by that wisp, with power borrowed from the Sovereign.

Planar projection clones understood the profound mysteries, but they didn’t possess the power of Will!

“Although this is the projection clone of the Chief Sovereign, the projection clone doesn’t have the power of Will. In terms of power, it is just on par with an ordinary Lord Prefect.” Linley didn’t feel worried at all about this ‘Chief Sovereign of Light’ before him. This was just a planar projection clone; it was no match for a Paragon, much less Linley.

The enormous planar projection clone stared coldly at Linley.

“Clementine, how did this red caltrop diamond end up being taken by Linley?” The planar projection clone looked at Clementine.

Clementine immediately laughed sourly. “Chief Sovereign, you have no idea what level Linley’s power has reached. He isn’t just a Highgod Paragon; his body is definitely on the level of Hemmers and Beirut, comparable to a Sovereign artifact. His material attacks are tens of times more powerful than mine; perhaps even a hundred. There was nothing I could do!”

“How can that be?” The Chief Sovereign of Light stared towards Linley in astonishment.

In recorded history, not a single supreme expert whose body was comparable to a Sovereign artifact was able to become a Paragon.

“This is true.” The Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, laughed. “We personally witnessed it. And not just that; in terms of speed as well, he vastly outstrips us. Clementine wasn’t even able to flee. He had no other choice...he had to hand over the red caltrop diamond.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light looked at Linley.

“Chief Sovereign, dare I ask, can I leave now?” Linley asked.

“You want to leave?” The Chief Sovereign of Light let out a cold snort, but unfortunately, this was just a planar projection clone. The Chief Sovereign of Light was only able to talk right now.

Bebe, by Linley’s side, spoke out irritably. “Chief Sovereign, the fight over the red caltrop diamond in the material plane is a matter for us Deities. Here in the material plane, we fought over it fairly, and the strongest ended up taking it. My Boss now holds it, so naturally it belongs to my Boss. Chief Sovereign, why have you sent a planar projection clone over here? Do you want to threaten my Boss?”

An ugly look was on the Chief Sovereign of Light’s face.

He was indeed in the wrong in this matter!

The other eight Paragons all had Sovereigns behind them. The struggle in the Okerlund Plane was a struggle for Deities; the Sovereigns shouldn’t interfere.

If he were to intervene and threaten Linley, what if the other Sovereigns did the same? How would the Paragons be supposed to act?

“Linley.” The Chief Sovereign of Light suppressed the anger in his heart as he looked at Linley. “I know that Dunnington was sent by the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. You, then, shouldn’t have been. Perhaps the Redbud Sovereign is your backer. How about this. You hand the red caltrop diamond to me! As for the Redbud Sovereign, I will speak to her on your behalf. If you give it to me, it can be said that I’ll owe you a favor. What do you say?”

If he couldn’t use hard tactics, he would try soft ones.

“A favor?” Linley was about to say something, but suddenly...

“Haha, Augusta, your methods aren’t very good.” A deep, sonorous voice rang out, and an enormous surge of energy once more descended from the heavens. Unlike the light energy, this surge of energy was completely black and seemed to be filled with a murderous aura. It was Destruction-type Sovereign power. And then, it solidified into a blurry figure.

The Chief Sovereign of Light, seeing the situation, couldn’t help but frown.

“The Chief Sovereign of Destruction.” Linley mused to himself.

“Linley. I notified the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.” Dunnington sent.

Linley also knew that these Paragons all had methods by which they could communicate with the Sovereigns who stood behind them.

“Linley and I are engaging in free-willed negotiations. What right do you have to stop us?” The Chief Sovereign of Light said.

“Haha...” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction let out a clear laugh. “How can you call this ‘free will’? You are oppressing him with your power. You, Chief Sovereign of Light are verbally asking Linley to do this. But if I were to do the same? If the Chief Sovereign of Life, the Chief Sovereign of Death, the Chief Sovereign of Darkness, and the other Chief Sovereigns all acted in this matter? Tell me, how could Linley choose?”

The Chief Sovereign of Light didn’t make another sound.

His sudden manifestation of a projection clone had given others an excuse to point at the error in his actions.

Actually, the reason he had done this was because he had believed that this item was already his. He had travelled such a long distance in chaotic space, and yet, he suddenly learned that his item had gone missing. Naturally, the Chief Sovereign of Light had been enraged and, in his anger, allowed a planar projection clone to descend.

“This ‘Chief Sovereign’ isn’t much more better than an ordinary person.” Bebe sent mentally to Linley.

“Naturally. A Chief Sovereign is just a living creature who, after becoming a Highgod, was lucky enough to acquire a Sovereign spark then fuse with it, thus becoming a Sovereign. Just because they fused with Sovereign sparks doesn’t mean that their temperaments will change! Normally, these Sovereigns act high and mighty when dealing with us Deities; naturally, they can’t be bothered with us. This is a way of showing their superiority! But once there is a struggle that involves their own interests, such as this struggle over the Overgod talismans, their greedy or tyrannical natures will once more reveal themselves.” Linley sent back.

“This Chief Sovereign of Light really is tyrannical.” Bebe, after having met the Chief Sovereign of Light several times, couldn’t help but come to this judgment.

“The Chief Sovereign of Light is overbearing, but he always has been. Even Patriarch Gislason told me about this.” Linley still remembered the words Gislason had said to him.

Gislason even suspected that the four ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan had been killed by the Chief Sovereign of Light. He had also described the Chief Sovereign of Light’s overbearing nature.

While Linley and Bebe were chatting spiritually, the Chief Sovereigns of Light and Destruction were chatting as well.

“Fine. Neither of us will force Linley. Linley will choose for himself, who he wishes to offer the red caltrop diamond to.” The Chief Sovereign of Light couldn’t help but look at Linley.

“Linley, you can choose for yourself which Sovereign you wish to offer it to. You don’t have to take any attitude from any Sovereign. After all, there’s only a single red caltrop diamond, while there are tens of Sovereigns!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction looked towards Linley.

The Chief Sovereign of Light stared at Linley, his eyes containing a silent signal.

“Sorry, Chief Sovereign of Light.” Linley smiled.

The Chief Sovereign of Light’s face immediately changed.

“Hmph. You don’t know what’s good for you.” The Chief Sovereign of Light gave Linley a cold glance, and then his planar projection clone suddenly disappeared. Linley’s face, however, didn’t change. He stood there quietly in midair, and his face once more had a hint of a smile on it.

“Haha, Linley, well done.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction laughed easily. “You can choose who to give this red caltrop diamond to. Naturally, giving it to me would be good, but I won’t force you.” And then, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s planar projection clone suddenly disappeared as well.

The world once more returned to normalcy.

The waves of the sea continued to swell forward, and the other eight Paragons flew over, laughing.

“Haha, Boss, that Chief Sovereign of Light’s face just now was so amusing.” Bebe celebrated.

“I already offended the Chief Sovereign of Light once. Now, I’ve offended him again.” Linley sighed helplessly.

“That’s the sort of temper the Chief Sovereign of Light has.” Clementine laughed. While speaking, Clementine stretched his divine sense out to close off the surrounding area. Clearly, he didn’t want the other Highgods to hear the words between them Paragons.

“Hmph. That group of Sovereigns. Don’t be fooled by that superior attitude they always have. When any minor matter occurs that they care about, or even something that costs them the tiniest bit of face, they will be enraged.” The Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, snickered. “Actually, it’s understandable. They are so high and lofty that if anyone was to irritate them, they would probably let their fury descend upon the offender.”

“However, only a minority of Sovereigns are so bad-tempered.” Dunnington said with a smile. “The majority of Sovereigns are decent fellows.”

“Hmph. They were simply born earlier, shortly after the planes were formed. They were just one of the first batches of Highgods, then were lucky enough to acquire Sovereign sparks and fuse them.” The Paragon of Life said calmly. “In terms of the profound laws, the vast majority of Sovereigns are inferior to us, even though they enjoy vast amounts of faith energy!”

“I’ve seen quite a few Sovereigns, but the Chief Sovereign of Light is still the most overbearing of them all.” Linley said.

“Haha, the Chief Sovereign of Light is legendary for his overbearing manner. Even in material planes, amongst the various churches, the churches of light tend towards total hegemony. However, the Chief Sovereign of Light is powerful; he’s qualified to act so tyrannically!” The Paragon of Earth, that four meter tall azure-haired fellow, laughed.

“The Bonerock Sovereign of Death, before the previous Planar War which occurred countless years before, personally attacked a pair of commander-level experts.”

This group of Highgod Paragons leisurely chatted about the various Sovereigns.

This was a material plane; there was no need to fear that the Sovereigns would discover it through divine sense.

After chatting for a long time, Linley learned quite a few things regarding the Sovereigns. The more he heard, the more clearly Linley felt that the Sovereigns were nothing special; they, too, felt joy, rage, grief, and amusement. It was much like how...to mortals, Deities were creatures who were far above them. But in the Infernal Realm, Deities formed into bandit groups and acted in ways that were even more nakedly selfish and aggressive than in the mortal world.

Perhaps...

Only the four Overgods who were the personifications of the Edicts were truly emotionless and unfeeling.

“Alright, everyone. The matter here in Okerlund Plane has come to an end. I’ll leave now.” The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, laughed.

After this friendly discussion, all of the people present had grown much closer to each other.

“Let’s leave together. We need to leave as well.”

Dunnington and the other Paragons were nearby as well.

“Boss, time to leave.” Bebe said hurriedly.

“Everyone, you can leave first. I have something to take care of.” Linley suddenly said.

The eight Paragons, although puzzled, didn’t say anything. They bid Linley farewell, and then the eight of them began to fly towards the Fogdeep continent.

“Boss, what is it?” Bebe said.

Linley frowned as he sent with worry, “Bebe, when I acquired the red caltrop diamond, I was too excited. I didn’t think about things in detail. But now...now that I’ve calmed down, I’ve realized that I absolutely cannot go back through the teleportation arrays!”

“Can’t go back through the teleportation arrays?” Bebe stared.

“Right. The teleportation arrays will take me to the Divine Planes or the Higher Planes. You should know that the Sovereigns all very much want to acquire the red caltrop diamond. In the Okerlund Plane, I’m not able to fight with them at all. However, if I teleport to a Divine Plane or a Higher Plane, then perhaps I’ll find...that a Sovereign will be there at the array, waiting for me!” Linley laughed sourly.

If, as soon as he teleported somewhere, he immediately saw a Sovereign...

He would be finished. There would be no chance of escape.

“Each of the planes have a varying number of teleportation arrays. The Infernal Realm has many, but the Netherworld only has two teleportation array locations. There are, however, quite a few Sovereigns in the Higher Planes and Divine Planes. The chances of one of them lying in wait are quite high! Even if Lesser Sovereigns have no need for it, they might give it to a Chief Sovereign so as to gain a favor.” Linley felt quite frustrated.

“Boss, where should we go, then?” Bebe now knew that the situation was, indeed, terrible.

“Right. Where shall we go?” Linley felt completely lost.

It was true that the Seven Divine Planes and Four Higher Planes had many teleportation locations, some of which wouldn’t have Sovereigns nearby. But Linley couldn’t take the risk! If he failed, he wouldn’t even have the chance to feel regret.

“I’ve acquired the red caltrop diamond, but I don’t know how to return to the Yulan Plane.” Linley laughed bitterly.

“Can it be that we’ll have to take the chance?” Bebe muttered.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 45, Beirut's True Power!

Many colored streams of light flowed about randomly, collectively forming the vast and endless region of chaotic space.

Chaotic space could be said to be the most dangerous place of all!

Even ordinary divine artifacts that were brought in would be torn asunder by the terrifying chaotic energy streams. Only experts who had defensive Sovereign artifacts or Highgod Paragons would be able to just barely stay alive in the face of the repeatedly clashes of energy in chaotic space. But despite that being the case, Highgod Paragons would be completely helpless in chaotic space.

The explosive streams of energy clashed against each other. When trapped within, the only choice was to allow the energy streams to take you where it willed.

Right at this moment...

A hazy white glow covered a large figure and the area around him. This large figure was dressed with a long white robe that was embroidered with golden patterns. His long gold hair fluttered loosely in an eye-catching manner. He stood there in the center of the vast, endless flows of chaotic energy. The rainbow colored chaotic streams clashed against him, but weren't able to budge him at all. This person was the greatest experts amongst the seven Sovereigns of Light...the Chief Sovereign of Light.

The Chief Sovereign of Light's eyes stared coldly into the distance.

"The red caltrop diamond was already in my hands. I didn't imagine..."

The Chief Sovereign of Light's eyes held a hint of anger in them. "However, even if that woman, the Redbud Sovereign, is the one behind him, when he moves from the Okerlund Plane to the Infernal Realm, he will be randomly teleported to one of the teleportation arrays. Perhaps the red caltrop diamond will fall into the hands of the other Sovereigns.

He immediately send the word through a clone he had left behind in the Divine Light Plane. "Derry [De'lei], keep an eye on Linley. See which teleportation array Linley travels through and which plane he goes to."

"Yes, Chief Sovereign."

Although Clementine had led a large group of Highgods away, in truth, those Highgods actually obeyed the orders of Derry, because Derry was one of the two individuals who maintained contact with the Sovereign. Those Highgods immediately spread out their divine senses, locking upon Linley and Bebe, located above the ocean.

They were watching Linley's movements.

Linley naturally used his own divine sense to prevent the other Highgods from tracking him.

"Take the chance? No way! There are too many Sovereigns paying attention to the Overgod talismans. I imagine that the vast majority of teleportation arrays have Sovereigns nearby. Although I am powerful, in the face of a Sovereign, I won't be able to fight back at all." Linley shook his head. "I can't make any mistakes when it comes to this red caltrop diamond."

“Then...what should we do?” Bebe was rather irritated and upset as well.

Linley pondered for a while, but still wasn't able to come up with a completely secure option. Although there were Sovereigns in the Infernal Realm who seemed to be on good terms with Linley, in reality, that was just some special attention that they paid to him, a junior. If it involved the red caltrop diamond...although the planar projection clone of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had spoken quite nicely, things wouldn't necessarily remain that way once Linley returned to the Infernal Realm.

After all, in the Okerlund Plane, his projection clone wasn't able to do anything to Linley, and so trying to force him was pointless.

But once they arrived in the Infernal Realm, wouldn't the Sovereign want to take the Overgod talisman?

“Boss, let's go ask my Grandpa Beirut. Perhaps he has a way.” Bebe suddenly suggested.

“That's our only choice.” Linley nodded slightly.

The Yulan Plane. The Baruch Empire. Dragonblood Castle.

In recent days, Beirut had been living in Linley's Dragonblood Castle, while Linley's divine clone would often chat with Beirut regarding the advancement of matters in the Okerlund Plane. They often spent time together recently, causing Linley and Beirut to feel even closer and more friendly with each other.

“Swoosh!”

A figure flashed forward and arrived within the empty garden. It was Linley. Within the garden, Beirut was teasing two young children of the Baruch clan quite happily.

“The two of you, go play over there for now.” Linley said while laughing calmly.

“Yes.” The two children, upon seeing Linley, didn't even dare to breathe too loudly. They immediately left obediently.

Within Dragonblood Castle, Linley's status had long ago risen to an extreme. In the hearts of the descendants of the Baruch clan, Linley was the most supreme exalted person alive.

“What has you in such a hurry?” Beirut laughed calmly.

Linley said helplessly, “Lord Beirut, the situation right now is quite grim.”

“Oh?” Beirut frowned, staring solemnly towards Linley.

“This is the situation. I've already acquired the red caltrop diamond, but I am quite frustrated about how I should return to the Yulan Plane! After all, the Okerlund only has eleven teleportation arrays which lead to the Seven Divine Planes and the Four Higher Planes. There are so many Sovereigns...I'm worried that most teleportation arrays probably have Sovereigns watching them. Once I appear, they will probably come to seize it.”

Beirut nodded slightly.

“Linley, you wish to keep the red caltrop diamond for yourself?” Beirut suddenly said.

“Yes.” Linley nodded.

If Linley had to offer the red caltrop diamond to a Chief Sovereign, for example the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, he could just teleport to the Infernal Realm. Most likely, the other Sovereigns of the Infernal

Realm wouldn't dare fight over something of the Chief Sovereign's. If Linley lied and said that he gave it to the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, then moved to teleport back somewhere else...

This wasn't very practical.

First of all, if he were to lie and use the Chief Sovereign of Destruction to deceive others, that would be deceiving the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

Secondly, if there were any other Sovereigns nearby, they surely wouldn't just watch as Linley arrived, then teleported back to the Yulan Plane right away! Most likely, as soon as Linley told the teleportation staff members where he was going, his lies would be seen through.

"Describe what happened in the fight over the red caltrop diamond in detail to me." Beirut said solemnly.

"Alright. Back then, the eight Paragons and I all arrived at Lionheart City. We were all trying to guess at the real meaning of the three words, 'Lion Heart City', and what they meant..." Linley began to describe in detail everything, including how the Chief Sovereign had descended a projection clone.

As Beirut listened, he began to frown.

"The Chief Sovereign of Light actually went into chaotic space and was hastening towards the Okerlund Plane?" Beirut said in surprise.

"Right. Clementine told me. This was precisely why the Chief Sovereign of Light was so angry, I suppose." Linley said.

Beirut fell silent.

"If you are going to take it for your own...then..." Beirut pondered carefully.

"Linley!" Beirut suddenly said. "Let's do this. Your original body and Bebe shall remain in the Okerlund Plane for now. Pretend to have gained a sudden insight and begin to engage in closed door training. Shut yourself in for ten days or so."

"Lord Beirut, are you saying...?" Linley was slightly stunned, but then he understood. "You are telling me to delay? As time passes, those Sovereigns will no longer remain by the teleportation arrays? But that's not necessarily true; if the Sovereigns just go ahead and begin training in the area around the teleportation arrays, they could easily wait for ten million years."

Sovereigns were in possession of eternal life. What was a ten million year wait to them?

"That isn't the reason." Beirut laughed calmly. "A little while later, you'll know."

"Alright." Linley still trusted Beirut greatly.

Only, Linley was puzzled...Beirut asked him to remain in the Okerlund Plane for ten days? Why?

Within chaotic space.

The Chief Sovereign of Light had already embarked on the way back.

"Chief Sovereign, that Linley and Bebe actually are in no hurry to leave the Okerlund Plane. They've suddenly begun to train, right there in the air above the sea. Linley seems to have gained some sort of insight. Bebe is next to him, standing guard." The communications staff reported back immediately to the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“He had an insight? Linley has several divine clones. One reached the Paragon level, and the others are gaining insights as well. His talent is indeed formidable.” Although the Chief Sovereign of Light didn’t have any positive feelings towards Linley, he still had to somewhat sigh in approval in his heart.

Given the Chief Sovereign of Light’s speed, that very day, he returned back at the Divine Light Plane.

The eleventh day after Linley acquired the red caltrop diamond!

Within Dragonblood Castle.

Linley was accompanying his father, Hogg, drinking and chatting. Right at this moment, Beirut suddenly walked over from a nearby door.

“Linley!” Beirut said solemnly.

“Father. I’ll go accompany Mr. Beirut first.” Linley said. Hogg knew that Linley and Beirut had something important to discuss, and so just laughed and withdrew.

“Follow me.” Beirut said calmly, then flew out.

Linley hurriedly followed.

“Swoosh...” Beirut flew forward, with Linley hurriedly following from behind.

“So fast.” Linley was startled that he was actually almost unable to keep up.

Linley’s divine clones had all undergone a soul mutation as well, and his bodies were all very powerful, and also in possession of strong Will. They were all capable of using fused divine power as well. The speed of his divine clones wasn’t that much weaker than his original body’s. And yet, he was almost unable to keep with Beirut!

In the blink of an eye, Linley and Beirut departed from the Yulan continent region and arrived within the South Sea region.

Beirut suddenly came to a halt, and Linley did so as well.

“Lord Beirut you, you are...?” Linley said, puzzled.

“Didn’t you say that you want to know a way to return to the Yulan Plane?” Beirut’s eyes had a special light in them. A smile that wasn’t a smile played on his lips as he looked at Linley.

Linley was completely baffled.

“The way is very simple! Pass through chaotic space and return to the Yulan continent.” Beirut laughed calmly.

“Pass through chaotic space?” Linley was startled. According to legends, even Paragons would be helpless within chaotic space. “Lord Beirut, this...chaotic space is very terrifying. Highgod Paragons that are driven within can do nothing but be carried away by the currents. Although I am stronger than Paragons, I’m not necessarily going to be able to withstand chaotic space.”

Linley didn’t have much confidence!

“I’m not asking you to go alone.” Beirut said with a smile, and then he opened his hand into a palm.

With a palm blow, he slashed open the air!

“Rumble...” The weak spatial walls of the Yulan Plane ruptured, immediately revealing a massive spatial tear.

Material planes were very weak. At Linley’s level, experts could just use their control over elemental essence to chop out a small pocket dimension within a material plane. But of course, this was something they could only accomplish in a material plane. If it were the Infernal Realm or the Netherworld, there was no way this could be done.

Sovereigns, however, could even create their own independent divine plane through their terrifying control over elemental essence.

Independent divine planes versus pocket dimensions formed from material planes.

From this one, one could tell the terrifying difference in power between Sovereigns and Deities.

“Follow me.” Beirut grabbed Linley, took a step forward, then threw him through the spatial rift.

“This...Lord Beirut!” Linley was shocked.

He was grabbed and pulled by Beirut directly out of the Yulan Plane and into chaotic space.

Multicolored flows of chaotic space spun everywhere in such an eye-catching, beautiful manner. But Linley was now trapped, and one surge after another chaotic energy clashed against his body. Linley didn’t hold back at all, instantly activating the fused divine power within his body to resist the clashing chaotic energy.

“Crackle...” A spatial tear appeared nearby.

Chaotic energy crashed against Linley, wanting to drive him into the spatial rift, but Linley resisted.

“The energy of chaotic space truly is frightening. No wonder even Highgod Paragons are helpless. However, I’m able to just barely move against the current.” Linley discovered that, at full strength, he was still able to resist the spatial flows and move forward. Linley felt as though...

He was a toddler who was advancing through rapid river waters.

“Linley, how do you feel?” Beirut’s voice rang out.

Linley turned to look.

Beirut stood there with a faint smile within streams of chaotic energy, not paying them any attention at all.

“Lord Beirut, you...?” Linley was surprised.

Even Paragons would be washed away by the chaotic streams of energy. But Beirut just stood there, unmoving.

“Haha, if you move at that slow speed, even thousands of years wouldn’t be enough for you to make it from the Yulan Plane to the Okerlund Plane.” Beirut, seeing Linley’s movement speed, couldn’t help but laugh. As he spoke, Beirut released a strand of green light from his body, covering Linley within it.

“It is easy to get lost within chaotic space. Your original body is in the Okerlund Plane, and so you should know the correct direction. Guide the way. I’ll make haste.”

Beirut led Linley forward. Under the protection of the green light, they transformed into a flash of green lightning and instantly disappeared.

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 46, Beirut, Sovereign?

Chaotic streams of energy shot out in every direction at high speed. Linley, under Beirut's guidance, advanced at high speed.

Linley was currently completely stupefied. "How can this be? To be able to move at such a terrifying speed, even in chaotic space; it can be said that he is completely ignoring the chaotic energy flows. Beirut...his power...?" Linley turned his head to look at Beirut, who was by his side. His eyes were filled with disbelief.

There were no other possibilities.

Beirut had definitely surpassed the Deity level. Beyond the Deity level, there was only...the Sovereign level!

"Lord Beirut, you, you are a Sovereign?" Linley asked.

"Haha..." Beirut laughed clearly, and he couldn't help but stroke his black beard. "Linley, I'm able to casually fly at high speed through chaotic space, at a speed which is a hundred times faster than you are able to fly at in a material plane. You tell me. If I'm not a Sovereign, what am I?"

Linley was stupefied.

Beirut was clearly admitted that he was a Sovereign!

"Sovereign, but, this, how can this be?" Linley, for a moment, was completely dazed and confused. "Lord Beirut, there's no way for a Sovereign to enter a material plane. Material planes are completely unable to withstand the terrifying power of a Sovereign's energy."

In the Okerlund Plane, the Chief Sovereigns of Destruction and Light had only been able to manifest their planar projection clones.

"Haha...amongst Deities, there is indeed the saying that Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes." Beirut stroked his beard and smiled. "However, to speak more precisely...foreign Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes!"

"Foreign Sovereigns?" Linley frowned.

"Linley, do you know the principle behind why Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes?" Beirut changed to a different topic.

"Principle? Isn't it simply because Sovereigns possess too much energy, and material planes are unable to withstand them?" Linley said.

"Linley, if it were true that Sovereigns possess too much energy and material planes are unable to withstand them...think about that carefully. If the Sovereigns contract their energy and don't let it leak out of them, how could a material plane collapse?" Beirut laughed.

"That's true." Linley didn't understand.

If a Sovereign were to contract his energy and his aura, even if Linley was standing before him, Linley wouldn't sense anything at all.

Given how powerful their abilities at contracting their auras were, why would they cause a material plane to collapse?

“Thus, your earlier words were not completely accurate.” Beirut said with a calm laugh.

Beirut said with a sigh, “I imagine that even if you ponder it until your head starts hurting, you still won’t understand. Let me tell you, then! This has to do with the birth of one’s soul! Every single day, a material plane will give birth to new life, and every single living creature will possess a soul! For example, the living creatures of the Yulan Plane will have souls that are compatible with the Yulan Plane. The Yulan Plane is their home!”

Linley couldn’t help but nod.

He felt it as well...when he returned to the Yulan Plane, although the elemental essence in the Yulan Plane was far less dense than the Infernal Realm’s, Linley still felt very comfortable. It just felt different. Linley had always thought that this was just a psychological effect, but now, it seemed, it was because his soul had been born in the Yulan Plane.

It made sense!

When mortals died, their souls would enter the Netherworld and they would turn into undead. After an undead died, its soul would shatter and dissipate!

When Deities died, their souls would shatter and dissipate!

Since souls could dissipate, naturally, souls could be born as well!

When each infant was born in a material plane, when each magical beast was born, they would all gain souls! These souls would naturally have a special link to the plane they were from.

“Foreign Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes. This is because of their souls. Their souls were not born from these material planes, and when they enter one, they will naturally be rejected by the material planes! The energy of material planes and Sovereigns will naturally reject each other, but because the energies of the Sovereigns are too powerful, they will cause the entire plane to collapse!” Beirut explained in detail.

Linley now understood.

It was this mutual rejection that caused the material plane to collapse.

“If, however, the Sovereign’s soul was birthed within a particular material plane to begin with, then the material plane would be like his home! Even after he became a Sovereign, the material plane wouldn’t reject them. Since there is no rejection, Sovereigns would naturally be able to enter this material plane.” Beirut laughed.

“Lord Beirut, are you saying...that if a Sovereign’s homeland was a particular material plane, then he would be able to return to that material plane, while being unable to enter any others?” Linley said.

“Right.” Beirut laughed calmly. “Of the countless material planes of the multiverse, my Sovereign body is only able to enter the Yulan Plane. As for the other material planes, I am unable to enter.”

Everything was now clear.

“The Yulan Plane. Our home!” Linley let out a sigh.

He was born in the Yulan Plane, and his soul was born from there as well. The Yulan Plane was his home! No matter what level of power he attained, the Yulan Plane, his home, would never reject him, its child.

“Lord Beirut, since you are a Sovereign, then, then why hasn’t your Sovereign body entered the Higher Planes, and instead remains here in the Yulan Plane?” Linley said, puzzled. “Also, why did your divine clone become the Emissary of the Bloodridge Sovereign?”

“I had my divine clone become an Emissary because I wished to help the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Beirut laughed calmly. “As for the reason why my Sovereign clone hasn’t gone to the Infernal Realm or another Higher Plane, and instead remains in hiding in our homeland, that is because...if my Sovereign clone leaves our homeland, the Chief Sovereign of Light will pursue and attack!”

“The Chief Sovereign of Light will pursue and attack?” Linley was shocked.

So it seemed as though Beirut was hiding from enemies, which was why he hadn’t left.

Beirut’s method was quite effective. The Yulan Plane was Beirut’s home, but not the home of the Chief Sovereign of Light. Beirut could hide there without emerging, but the other Sovereigns wouldn’t be able to enter.

“Why would the Chief Sovereign of Light want to kill you?” Linley was very puzzled.

“Haha...of course he wants to kill me. His hatred for me is bone-deep. The only reason why my divine clone is permitted to remain safely in the Infernal Realm is because I managed to persuade the Chief Sovereign of Destruction to assist me, after paying a tremendous price.” Beirut laughed loudly. “Forget it. Enough about that. What matters now is to receive your original body and return to the Yulan Plane as soon as possible.”

Linley nodded.

Beirut leading him through chaotic space was quite dangerous as well. After all, since Beirut could enter chaotic space, so too could the Chief Sovereign of Light!

“No wonder Lord Beirut asked me to wait for ten or so days. He probably wanted to delay for a bit longer, so as to wait for the Chief Sovereign of Light to return to the Divine Light Plane.” Linley now completely understood why Beirut had asked him to wait for ten days.

Linley’s original body was within the Okerlund Plane, while his divine clones were with Beirut. Through the connection between his bodies, he was able to easily locate the correct direction, making it so that Beirut didn’t make any wrong turns while navigating the chaotic streams of this region.

“Lord Beirut, will the Chief Sovereign of Light pursue and attack us?” Linley was rather worried. Worried for Beirut.

“Don’t worry. How would he even know that we are in chaotic space?” Beirut said confidently. “In addition, when I entered chaotic space, I spread out my divine sense. The reach of a Sovereign’s divine sense is far beyond what you can imagine. As soon as he enters the range of my divine sense, I will have ample time to prepare.”

Linley nodded slightly.

The divine sense of a Sovereign could easily stretch across the entire Infernal Realm or the entire Netherworld. In addition, that clearly wasn’t their limit. From this, one could imagine how vast a distance it could reach. And thus, one could also imagine how powerful a Sovereign’s Will was. It was countless times more powerful than a Paragon’s will.

The Okerlund Plane.

“Rumble...”

The waves of the sea rolled forward. Linley sat there in the meditative position above the sea, with Bebe standing guard by his side.

Suddenly...

Linley opened his eyes, revealing a hint of a smile on his face. He sent mentally, “Bebe, let’s prepare to enter chaotic space.”

“Chaotic space?” Bebe was shocked. “Boss, are you preparing to return to the Yulan Plane through chaotic space?”

“Yes. However, not through my own powers.” Linley smiled.

“Then, if it isn’t you...who? A Sovereign? Which Sovereign is willing to help us?” Bebe was very puzzled.

“You will soon know.” Linley was intentionally secretive.

Through the connection between his bodies, Linley could clearly sense that his divine clone and Beirut had already reached the outer perimeter of the Okerlund Plane.

“Let’s go!” Linley grabbed Bebe with one hand, while at the same time, slashed down with his other hand. A gigantic spatial rift appeared, which began to pull on the surrounding area with an astonishing attractive force, swallowing up a great deal of even the seawater below.

“In you go.” Linley stepped forward and pulled Bebe into chaotic space. Immediately afterwards, the spatial tear slowly began to recover.

The air above the sea once more grew calm.

“Linley entered a spatial rift? Entered chaotic space?” The two groups of Highgods who were watching over Linley were greatly shocked.

It wasn’t just the forces of the Divine Light Plane which were watching over Linley. There were also forces from the Infernal Realm, the Divine Earth Plane, the Divine Wind Plane...every single side had left quite a few Highgods behind to watch over the movements of Linley and Bebe. But the fact that they had chosen to enter chaotic space completely stupefied the others.

“He entered chaotic space? Self-exile?” Those Highgods were speechless.

“He probably has a Sovereign who is there to welcome him.” The Highgods were able to guess this as well. “Quick, report it to the Sovereign.”

The various forces, through their divine clones, simultaneously reported back to their Sovereigns!

The Divine Light Plane. Deep within Godsgaol Sea.

“What? He chose to enter the flows of chaotic space?” The Chief Sovereign of Light’s eyes were filled with shock as well. But an instant later, he recovered, then laughed coldly, “The Sovereign behind Linley has definitely gone into chaotic space to welcome him! Who could it be? Redbud? Or is it...” A name suddenly appeared in the mind of the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“Beirut?” A hint of a killing desire appeared in the Chief Sovereign of Light’s eyes.

“It is very possibly Beirut!” The Chief Sovereign of Light didn’t hesitate at all. Energy trembled from his body, and a spatial rift suddenly appeared in front of him. With a single step, he entered chaotic space, and then the spatial rift disappeared.

Chaotic space. The Chief Sovereign of Light was moving like a ray of light, advancing at astonishing speed.

“Beirut, I hope you move quickly. If I end up catching you...hmph!” The Chief Sovereign of Light, although not certain that it was Beirut, felt that it was reasonable, given the relationship between Linley and him. Beirut was perpetually in hiding within the Yulan Plane; this had caused the Chief Sovereign of Light to long ago feel enraged towards him.

He wouldn’t give up even the slightest chance of killing Beirut!

The beautiful, cyclical flows of energy sped past them. Beirut’s body constantly emanated that green light, and it covered Linley and Bebe as they flew at high speed towards the Yulan Plane.

“Grandpa Beirut, am I dreaming?” Bebe looked at Beirut in disbelief. “Grandpa, you are actually a Sovereign? This, this is too inconceivable.” Earlier, he had followed Linley into chaotic space. Upon seeing Beirut’s arrival, Bebe had been completely, totally stupefied!

“Grandpa Beirut, you are a Sovereign. Why have you always hidden your power? Why are you the Emissary for the Bloodridge Sovereign?” Bebe asked questions nonstop.

“Alright, enough of this for now. Your Grandpa Beirut is currently moving at full speed. We can chat slowly once we return.” Linley said hurriedly. Linley understood that even for Beirut, travelling through chaotic space posed risks.

On the way over, though, Bebe talked nonstop. Clearly, he was simply too agitated.

“I just can’t hold it back.” Bebe clenched his fists as he flashed his teeth in a grin, clearly excited.

“Soon. By the amount of time we have spent in flight, we should be more than halfway there. Just wait a bit longer.” Linley consoled.

“Haha...” Beirut suddenly laughed.

“What is it?” Linley and Bebe both looked towards Beirut.

“The Chief Sovereign of Light really did come. I’ve already discovered him.” Beirut chortled merrily.

“You are still able to laugh aloud?” A deep, rumbling voice rang out in Beirut’s mind. It was the voice of the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“Why can’t I laugh?” Beirut snickered as he retorted. “I knew that if there was any chance at all of capturing me that you, Augusta, would definitely not give it up. But it is quite unfortunate; your speed is faster than mine, but the distance you have to travel is far greater. You won’t make it in time!”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 47, Battle

“The Chief Sovereign of Light?” Linley and Bebe exchanged glances. Their hearts clenched as they then turned towards Beirut.

Beirut was leading Linley and Bebe at high speed towards the Yulan Plane, while at the same time chatting with the Chief Sovereign of Light through divine sense. “Haha, Augusta, as I see it, you should go back to your Divine Light Plane. Chasing after me is a complete waste of time. Afterwards, you’ll have to go back with nothing to show for your efforts.”

Beirut’s mocking laughter was hidden within his words.

“Hmph. It’s too early to say such a thing. You still have quite a long distance between you and the Yulan Plane. You had best hope that you can enter the Yulan Plane first. If I catch you, then you and those two people with you will both definitely die!” The Chief Sovereign of Light’s face was quite sinister. The distance between him and Beirut in chaotic space was quite significant, and he was currently advancing at an astonishing speed. In terms of speed, he was indeed much faster than Beirut.

Unfortunately...

The Higher Planes and Divine Planes were very far away from the material planes to begin with. The vast majority of material planes, however, were located in the same region. The distance between the Okerlund Plane and the Yulan Plane, by comparison, was tens of times less than the distance between the Okerlund Plane and the Divine Light Plane.

“Haha, then keep chasing!” Beirut didn’t say anything else.

Within the vast, endless reaches of chaotic space, one side was hurrying forward while the other side was chasing.

The Infernal Realm.

“Linley actually entered chaotic space?” A figure covered completely by a black aura mused in a low voice, then let out a laugh. “It seems Linley actually isn’t willing to give up the Overgod talisman or to give it to any other Sovereigns. That Beirut which stands behind him...he really has quite some courage.”

The Infernal Realm. The Redbud Continent. The Amethyst Mountains.

“Aside from Beirut, there can’t be anyone else.” The Redbud Sovereign could easily judge what had happened as well. “Given how cautious Beirut is, there shouldn’t be any problems.”

The news that Linley had torn open a spatial rift, then entered it alongside Bebe, had been quickly reported back to the various Sovereigns by the Highgods. It wasn’t just the Chief Sovereigns of the various Laws and Edicts; the other Sovereigns had also sent people to watch over Linley’s movements.

The Divine Wind Plane.

“Hmph, from the Yulan Plane to the Okerlund Plane? Excellent. My homeland, the Dylan [Di’lun] Plane, happens to be between them.” A hawk-nosed, silver-haired man, upon receiving this news, immediately

began to fly at high speed towards the teleportation array of the Divine Wind Plane. Soon, he reached the array.

“Dylan Plane.” The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, said calmly as he showed his Sovereign medallion.

“Yes.”

The soldiers didn’t dare act sluggishly. They immediately activated the teleportation array, and light began to flash and flicker. In the blink of an eye, the Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, arrived at his homeland...the material plane known as the Dylan Plane. He immediately tore open a spatial rift, then entered chaotic space. He immediately spread out his divine sense.

A hint of a smile played at the corners of Teresia’s lips. “Beirut, what a rare occasion. You actually left the Yulan Plane!”

“You actually left the Yulan Plane!” This voice rang out in Beirut’s mind, and Beirut’s face couldn’t help but sink.

“Grandpa Beirut, what is it?” Bebe noticed that the look on Beirut’s face was off, and he hurriedly asked.

Linley looked towards Beirut in concern as well. Beirut had an ugly look on his face. “Linley, Bebe, the situation is quite bad. That Teresia is quite close to us, and is in the way between us and home. Given his speed, he will probably encounter us shortly.”

“Teresia?” Linley and Bebe both looked at each other.

The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, was someone who Linley knew. When the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture, Molde, had released the Overgod mission information, Teresia had threatened Linley to try and force him to hand over the nine soul pearls. If it hadn’t been for the Bloodridge Sovereign’s intervention, Linley could very well have been killed by Teresia back then.

“Grandpa, that’s not a problem, right?” Bebe said, worried.

“This Teresia is a Lesser Sovereign of Wind. I, too, am a Lesser Sovereign of Wind. However...in the Laws, he has reached the level of Paragon. Thus, he is quite troublesome.” Although Beirut was concerned, he still led Linley and Bebe in a constant advance.

Linley frowned.

They were both Lesser Sovereigns, but one was a Paragon in the laws. By the looks of it, Beirut wasn’t a match for him.

“Fighting with Teresia isn’t a problem. The main problem is...once he ties us down, if the Chief Sovereign of Light makes it over, we will be finished.” Beirut said, rather worried.

“Right. If Grandpa starts to fight with Teresia, there’s no way he will be able to move forward.” Bebe was so frantic that his face turned red. “Once the Chief Sovereign of Light catches us, then...”

Linley looked at Beirut.

Neither he nor Bebe were able to help. They had to rely on Beirut.

“Teresia! Why do you want this Overgod talisman? The red caltrop diamond is just one of the three talismans. There isn’t much benefit to you for acquiring it. Can it be that you, a Lesser Sovereign, also dream of completing the mission and acquiring an Overgod artifact?” Beirut sent.

“If you don’t want me to bar you, that’s fine. Beirut, agree to the request I made last time.” Teresia sent.

“In your dreams.” Beirut couldn’t help but feel enraged.

“Haha, if you refuse, then I’ll stop you. Soon, I imagine, you and I will encounter each other.” Teresia laughed smugly.

Beirut suppressed his rage. “Speak. Aside from that, what else do you want in exchange for not stopping us.”

Teresia was a Paragon and a Lesser Sovereign of Wind. In terms of speed, he was slightly faster than even Beirut.

If Beirut wanted to bypass Teresia to return to the Yulan Plane, first of all, he would have to take a very roundabout path that was too distant. And secondly, Teresia could choose to simply travel straight to the Yulan Plane and wait for Beirut there. No matter what...there was no way to avoid Teresia.

“I’ve already told you what I want. Fine, if you aren’t able to satisfy that request, this is also acceptable...hand over the red caltrop diamond, and I’ll let you pass.” Teresia sent.

Hand over the red caltrop diamond? Wouldn’t that have made this journey pointless?

“Teresia, don’t force me too far.” Beirut sent furiously.

“Force you too far? And what will you do if I do force you too far? All you ever do is hide in the Yulan Plane, never daring to come out.” Teresia said arrogantly.

“Hmph. Then why don’t the two of us have a head-on competition.” Beirut sent furiously.

“Haha. So Beirut, who has the cowardice of a mouse, actually dares to speak such bold words! How rare, how rare indeed!” Teresia laughed mentally towards Beirut.

Beirut let out a cold snort, no longer saying anything.

Linley didn’t know what Beirut and Teresia were saying to each other, but he was able to guess what had happened, based on the look on Beirut’s face. “It seems Lord Beirut and Teresia weren’t able to come to an agreement. This...is going to be trouble.” Linley and Bebe had no choice but to wait and watch what was going to happen.

Currents of multicolored chaotic energy swirled about, with spatial rifts occasionally appearing.

Beirut continued to lead Linley and Bebe forward. Moments later.

“Grandpa, Teresia.” Bebe called out in surprise.

Linley stared hard into the distance. That aura of green light. That tall figure with long, flowing silver hair. Those narrow, slitted eyes that seemed to contain a knife-like gaze. That upwards-crooking cold smile as he looked at Beirut and the other two.

“Beirut.” Teresia spoke out.

“Teresia. You’d best leave right now. Later, you won’t be able to.” Beirut’s gaze was cold.

“Hmph.” Teresia’s face suddenly changed. “You actually notified a helper.”

“Of course. As soon as I noticed you, I made the notification.” Beirut said coldly.

“Just a Lesser Sovereign of Fire. Do you think I am afraid?” Teresia laughed disdainfully. “There are less than ten Sovereigns who have become Paragons. There aren’t many Lesser Sovereigns who are able to beat me. You, at least, aren’t one of them. I imagine your helper won’t be a match for me either.”

Linley rather frantically sent to Beirut, “Lord Beirut, Teresia is clearly delaying. The longer he delays, the worse it will be for us.”

“I know.” Beirut winked towards Linley. “Don’t worry, Linley. Everything is as I expected.”

Seeing how calm Beirut was, Linley couldn’t help but be influenced and feel more confident.

“Linley, last time, the Bloodridge Sovereign let you escape. This time, you will find it hard to.” Teresia waved his hand, and a cold, sharp light flashed as an enormous, thin sickle appeared. The aura that emanated from the sickle caused the surrounding chaotic space to tremble.

His body flashed. Then, like a dragon taking flight, he pierced through the kilometers separating them and chopped down towards Beirut, the sickle seeming to contain the power to shatter the heavens.

“Linley, take Bebe and make haste towards the direction of the Yulan Plane. I’ll be there shortly.” Beirut sent frantically.

“Yes.” Linley didn’t hesitate at all.

A long black staff suddenly appeared in Beirut’s hands. The long staff suddenly expanded to a length of a hundred meters long and many meters wide, and it viciously smashed over.

“Clang!”

The terrifying scimitar tore through chaotic space and smashed directly against the long black staff, but was only able to make it tremble slightly.

“Bebe, let’s go.” Linley grabbed Bebe and immediately worked hard to resist the flows of chaotic space and make haste towards the Yulan Plane.

“Boss, Grandpa will be fine, right?” Bebe said, worried.

“If we stay behind, we will negatively impact your Grandpa Beirut.” Linley understood the situation quite well. “If Teresia were to attack us in order to threaten Beirut, that would be troublesome. Let’s go now. After Beirut’s battle concludes, he will catch up to us.” Although he said this, in his heart, Linley still felt worried.

If Beirut and Teresia fought for too long, and the Chief Sovereign of Light caught up to them, what was to be done?

“Rumble...”

A terrifying surge of wind-type energy suddenly swept over, actually slamming against the body of Linley, who had flown more than a thousand kilometers away.

“Swoosh!” Linley actually borrowed the momentum from that surge and fled even more quickly!

“It really is a battle between Sovereigns. Even remnant energy ripples from a thousand meters away are far more powerful than the strikes of Paragons.” Linley was secretly shocked. He continued to hold Bebe as he frantically charged forward.

Linley and Bebe constantly advanced forward. A few moments later.

“Boss, there is someone else up ahead.” Bebe said, stunned.

“Another Sovereign!” Linley’s face instantly turned ashen!

Beirut was already blocking Teresia from behind; if another Sovereign came, how could he or Bebe resist?

A fiery light flashed over from far away. Moments later, it arrived by Linley and Bebe’s sides. Linley and Bebe looked cautiously at this person, and as he slowed down, they were able to clearly see who it was.

“This is...” Linley and Bebe were both stunned.

Long black hair. A long white robe. Scarlet, crimson eyebrows!

“Bluefire.” Linley called out in shock.

They would never have imagined that the newcomer was Bluefire! And, judging from the aura around Bluefire’s body, he was using fire-type Sovereign power...clearly, Bluefire was a Sovereign of Fire!!!

“Mr. Leylin, you...” Linley was completely flummoxed.

“Mr. Leylin, how did you become a Sovereign?” Bebe called out in surprise. Only Sovereigns could possibly move through chaotic space at such speed.

“Bluefire, you came.” A green blur hurried over from behind at high speed.

“Beirut.” Bluefire smiled as he looked at him. “You lead Linley and Bebe and hurry back to the Yulan Plane. I’ll help you ward off this Teresia. I’m more than enough to deal with him.”

“While fighting with him, move towards the direction of the Yulan Plane. No matter what, don’t let the Chief Sovereign of Light catch you.” Beirut instructed.

“Don’t worry. In terms of speed, I’m a bit faster than you.” Bluefire smiled.

“Linley, Bebe, let’s go.” Beirut didn’t waste any words, immediately leading Linley and Bebe once more towards the Yulan Plane.

As for Bluefire, his entire body covered with a blazing aura, he very confidently stood there in the middle of chaotic smile, smiling as he looked at the rather haggard-looking Teresia who was in hot pursuit. “Teresia, you want to seize the red caltrop diamond and offer it to the Chief Sovereign of Light? Give up. You have no chance.”

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 48, Success

Within chaotic space. A green blur and a red blur stood in midair, staring at each other.

“You are...” Teresia looked carefully at Bluefire. “That lucky kid?”

“Lucky?” Bluefire smiled, then nodded. “Right.”

Bluefire looked carefully back at Teresia. “Judging from the looks of you, it seems as though you didn’t gain any advantage in your battle with Beirut? A Lesser Sovereign who is also a Paragon, in the face of Beirut’s ultimate attacks, doesn’t seem to fare so well.”

“He, he’s a madman.” When Teresia thought back to his earlier battle with Beirut, he couldn’t help but feel enraged.

Beirut had launched one staff blow after another, surging forth like the wild, endless waves of the sea.

He was like a madman, just wildly smashing down.

Teresia was only able to just barely prevent himself from losing.

“Beirut has an advantage in terms of his Sovereign weapon as well.” Teresia said silently to himself.

Sovereign artifacts were all ordinary artifacts that had been constantly nurtured by a Sovereign’s ‘Will’ and power. After a long period of time, they would then form into a Sovereign artifact.

But the artifacts which were created generally didn’t have different levels of power, unless the difference in the original materials for the items were vastly different in quality.

For example, other Sovereigns’ artifacts might be made from ordinary mineral ores, while Beirut’s was created from divine spark essence.

Of course there would be a difference in these two Sovereign artifacts!

Beirut, as a divine beast ‘Godeater Rat’, had an extremely powerful body. That, paired with his Sovereign’s Will, made his material attacks extremely terrifying. In addition, thanks to possessing the innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’, Beirut’s soul defense had become incredibly terrifying as well. Although they were both Lesser Sovereigns...even Teresia, someone who had also become a Paragon in the Laws, found it hard to defeat Beirut.

“Beirut’s innate gifts are incredible; he is comparable to the former Four Divine Beasts. What of you, then? Do you think that you can stop me?” Teresia stretched his hand out, and that icy sickle once more appeared in his hand.

“Oh?” Bluefire smiled slightly. A fiery long spear suddenly appeared in his hands, and the sharpness of the tip of the spear seemed to cause the surrounding chaotic space to tremble.

“Come, then...” Bluefire suddenly smiled. The right arm which held the long spear suddenly trembled, causing the surrounding space within a hundred meters to begin swirling like a whirlpool...

But enough of the battle between Bluefire and Teresia for now. Beirut's group of three was continuing to frantically advance towards the Yulan Plane at high speed.

"Fortunately, Bluefire was quite fast. Although I still have to carry the two of you over, by the looks of it, the Chief Sovereign of Light won't be able to catch up." Beirut's divine sense informed him as to how far away the Chief Sovereign of Light was. Based the speed at which the two sides travelled at, he could easily tell whether or not the Chief Sovereign of Light would be able to catch up.

"Lord Beirut, how did Mr. Leylin become a Sovereign?" Linley was puzzled. "Back then, in the Planar Battlefield, wasn't Mr. Leylin a Paragon?"

"If Mr. Leylin was a Sovereign during the Planar War, when Magnus wanted to kill my Boss, why didn't he arrive earlier?" Bebe said, puzzled.

"Bluefire is the same as me; his Sovereign clone isn't able to enter the other Divine Planes or Higher Planes." Beirut said with a sigh.

"The Bluefire who entered the Planar Battlefield was just his original body and his divine earth clone. His divine fire clone remained within the Yulan Plane." Beirut laughed as he explained.

"Original body?" Linley instantly understood.

Bluefire should have had three bodies as well. One a Saint-level original body, one a fire-type divine clone, and one an earth-type divine clone. Bluefire's fire-type divine clone had become a Sovereign. When his Saint-level original body joined together with his earth-type divine clone, it naturally possessed the Godrealm of a Highgod. As for Sovereign power...he could borrow from his Sovereign clone.

As for the profound mysteries of the Laws? His Saint-level original body would naturally understand the Laws of Fire.

As for the power of Will...

Upon becoming a Sovereign, given how powerful the Will of his Sovereign clone was, although the Will of his other clones would be much weaker, they would still be comparable to a Paragon's Will.

"No wonder." Linley let out a sigh.

"Grandpa Beirut, you haven't yet explained how Mr. Leylin became a Sovereign."

"This..." Beirut hesitated momentarily, then shook his head. "This is rather complicated. I won't be able to explain it all in a brief period of time. Once we return to the Yulan Plane, I'll discuss it with you in detail...Bluefire and I have been forging Linley this entire time. Given your current strength, Linley, it is about time."

Linley felt a surge of puzzlement. However, as they were currently fleeing, this truly wasn't the time to chat in detail.

They continued to fly forward.

"Whooosh." Chaotic streams of energy flew everywhere, and space constantly ruptured and collapsed.

Linley's group of three travelled forward at high speed for quite some time. They were drawing close to the Yulan Plane, and at this moment, a surge of energy drew close to them from behind at high speed.

"Linley. Bebe." That gentle voice rang out as the figure approached them.

“Mr. Leylin.” Linley and Bebe looked over. The newcomer was Leylin ‘Bluefire’.

Bluefire was a Sovereign, and also a Paragon. Experts of the Laws of Fire were specialized in speed...Bluefire’s speed was naturally somewhat faster than Beirut’s. Given that Beirut was also bringing two people with him, Beirut’s speed naturally grew even closer. It only made sense that Bluefire was able to catch up.

“Bluefire, how was Teresia? Annoying to deal with, right?” Beirut laughed as he spoke.

“Of course a Paragon of Wind would be hard to deal with.” Bluefire laughed calmly. “But I’m a Paragon Sovereign as well. I wasn’t able to do anything to him, but he wasn’t able to do anything to me either. Now that both of us are here, that Teresia naturally won’t dare to come over and just invite more suffering upon himself.”

“You are all Paragons, but I...” Beirut sighed. “It truly is hard to become a Paragon.”

“It truly is.” Linley nodded as well.

To the outside world, the story was that he was a Paragon. But Linley, of course, knew...that his power came not from being a Paragon, but from his four-way soul mutation.

“Haha...” Beirut suddenly laughed. “The Yulan Plane is up ahead. The Chief Sovereign of Light has been hastening towards us this entire time for nothing.” Beirut was quite smug. While speaking, the four of them arrived at the borders of the distant, massive plane.

Linley’s eyes couldn’t help but light up. They flew away from the center of that flow of chaotic space and towards the edges of the plane.

“The Yulan Plane. Here we are!” Linley felt extremely excited.

After reaching the Yulan Plane, he finally would be able to safely summon the Overgod. In addition, his family and friends were in the Yulan Plane as well...

“Haha, Augusta! We’ve already arrived. You’ve been hurrying over with no stop and no rest, but alas, in the end, you weren’t able to catch up.” Beirut, while drawing close to the planar borders, stared into the distant and spoke out through divine sense. “This was a rare chance for you, but you weren’t able to grasp it. You really are useless.”

A good distance away, deep in chaotic space, the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, simply stood there, an ugly look on his face.

“That Teresia really is useless.” Augusta said to himself.

But he understood that once the second Sovereign, ‘Bluefire’, made his appearance, it was guaranteed that there was no way Teresia would be able to tie down Beirut.

“Beirut, don’t be so smug. No matter how smug you are, you are limited to the Yulan Plane. If you have any ability...why don’t you let your Sovereign clone come to the Divine Light Plane or to the Infernal Realm.” The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, sent mockingly. “A fellow who is as cowardly as a rat, actually dares to talk so brashly?”

But Beirut wasn’t the slightest bit angry.

“As cowardly as a rat? I’m a Godeater Rat to begin with!” Beirut sent back with a laugh. “I, a Godeater Rat, love to eat divine sparks. I even like Sovereign sparks...haha...and I’m quite sorry about what happened that year! Haha...” Beirut was utterly delighted with himself.

Augusta, hearing these words, had an even uglier look appear on his face.

“Linley, Bebe, let’s go. Let’s go home.” Beirut laughed loudly. “Let Augusta slowly stew in his anger. Ideally, he’ll die from it.”

Augusta’s divine sense was spread out; naturally, he was able to hear these words. He became all the more enraged. But him and Beirut were like fire and water to begin with; even if Beirut had spoken kindly towards him, Augusta wouldn’t spare him. Thus, as Beirut saw it, he might as well anger Augusta a bit more.

“Oh, time to go home.” Bebe called out jubilantly as well.

Immediately, Beirut, Bluefire, Linley, and Bebe passed through the planar boundary and returned to the Yulan Plane.

In the air above the vast South Sea of the Yulan Plane. Beirut’s group of four was jubilantly flying through the skies.

“Haha, when I think about the look on Augusta’s face, I feel absolutely tickled.” Beirut laughed loudly.

“We are finally back. It is all over.” Linley felt as though he was in a dream. Everything was so perfect.

“Mr. Leylin, that continent you created is right ahead of us.” Bebe pointed towards a distant continent. This continent had been created by Bluefire through relying on his divine earth clone. After having been shaped and sculpted by Bluefire, it was now far larger than even the Yulan continent.

In addition, in the past, Beirut and Bluefire had jointly moved tens of millions of humans, many magical beasts, and many types of living creatures over to this continent.

In the past three thousand years, this continent had flourished and reached a population of billions as well.

“Lord Beirut, I have to admit something to you.” Linley said honestly.

“Eh?” Beirut looked towards Linley.

“I have three of the Overgod talismans.” Linley didn’t hide anything at all. Linley still felt very grateful towards Beirut. In addition...he was about to prepare to summon the Overgod. There was no way he would be able to hide that now.

“Three?” Beirut and Bluefire were both shocked.

Bebe nodded and chortled as well. “That rumor which Molde had made up back then wasn’t completely false. The nine soul pearls had indeed fallen into my Boss’s hands. As for the pentametal crown...my Boss was lucky enough to encounter it during the Planar War.”

“Haha...the heavens are helping us.” Beirut laughed loudly.

“Haha, wonderful. Beirut, this is absolutely wonderful.” Bluefire couldn’t help but laugh loudly as well.

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

What was going on?

Just because he acquired three Overgod talismans, Beirut and Bluefire would lose their composure like this?

“Linley.” Beirut’s eyes were shining. He seemed to be a beggar who was seeing a fortune worth trillions.” You have three talismans. You are about to summon the Overgod, and when you do, remember, you must

request a Overgod artifact. As for what type of Overgod artifact...perhaps a defensive Overgod artifact or perhaps an Overgod weapon. Both would be good. You choose for yourself what you want!"

"Right." Bluefire said hurriedly to Linley as well. "Choose an Overgod artifact! This is a rare opportunity."

"Linley, you truly are quite formidable, to be able to hide this for so long...yes, you've done very well. You've acquired an Overgod artifact. Your actions were completely correct. Haha..I originally only thought you'd have, at most, two Overgod talismans. Who would've thought that you'd have three?" Beirut clearly was quite excited.

"An Overgod artifact...wonderful." Bluefire couldn't but sigh in praise as well.

Linley was rather astonished, but then he said with a forced laugh, "Lord Beirut, Mr. Leylin, I truly must apologize. I'm not planning to ask for an Overgod artifact!"

Beirut and Bluefire's laughter came to a halt. The looks on their face froze as they stared towards Linley in astonishment.

"Linley, what did you just say?" Beirut was completely stunned.

The nearby Bebe said, "Grandpa Beirut, the reason my Boss has risked his life to acquire the Overgod talismans was because...Boss has always been wanting a way to bring Grandpa Doebling back to life. Grandpa Doebling is extremely important to him."

"Doebling Cowart?" Beirut couldn't believe it. He frantically urged, "Linley, I know about you and Doebling Cowart, but he's already dead. His soul is dissipated and dispersed. Perhaps the Overgod of Life can bring him back, but...he is only a Saint. To sacrifice such a precious opportunity for him? This is an Overgod mission. You can acquire an Overgod artifact!" Beirut was extremely frantic.

"Linley. You can't waste an opportunity like this. An Overgod mission will be issued only once in countless years. Even if there is a second one, you won't necessarily be able to complete it." Bluefire said frantically as well.

Linley looked at Beirut and Bluefire, forced out a smile, then shook his head.

"I'm sorry..."

Linley let out a sigh. "Lord Beirut, it is true that in my heart, I wish to train to the very pinnacle of power. However, in my heart, the value of an Overgod artifact can't even compare to Grandpa Doebling. Forget about an Overgod artifact; even if I had to give up my power as a Soul Mutate, I wouldn't hesitate. In my heart...Grandpa Doebling is as important as my parents. He is also my true teacher!"

Family, teacher, guide...

This was what Doebling Cowart was to Linley.

"Linley, you can't act based on sentiment. This is a rare opportunity! It is an Overgod artifact! Even Chief Sovereigns would go crazy for such a treasure." Beirut said hurriedly.

"Linley, you can't give up this chance." Bluefire said frantically as well.

Linley just shook his head stubbornly, then said with apologetic regret, "Lord Beirut, if it hadn't been for Grandpa Doebling, I probably would just be an ordinary mortal. Perhaps I wouldn't even be able to restore my clan. As for the Overgod artifact...it is precious, but I have no other desire, other than for Grandpa Doebling to come back to life. I hope that you will understand, Lord Beirut." Linley bowed solemnly.

“But...” Bluefire didn’t know what to say.

Bluefire and Beirut exchanged a glance. Beirut just let out a powerless sigh. “Alright, Linley. I understand how you are feeling. You were the one to complete this Overgod mission. I won’t force you! Make your own decision.”

“Apologies.” Linley bowed once more.

When this word came out, Beirut and Bluefire couldn’t help but to laugh sourly. Clearly, Linley had already decided that he would choose to save Doebling Cowart!

“Overgod.” Linley took a deep breath, then began to remove the three talismans. The Overgods were the personifications of the Edicts, and since the countless planes all operated in accordance with the Edicts...naturally, the Edicts were omnipresent. In other words, the Overgods were omnipresent as well.

The material planes held the Overgods. Chaotic space held the Overgods. The Higher Planes held the Overgods. They were truly omnipresent!

The Overgods were neither human nor living.

They were the Edicts!

Thus, they could appear anywhere. A summons to the Overgods could thus occur anywhere as well.

“I hope this is successful.” Linley murmured silently to himself. In his mind, the image of Grandpa Doebling once more sprang to mind, while at the same time, the pentametal crown, studded with the nine soul pearls, appeared in Linley’s hands, along with that red caltrop diamond. The nearby Beirut and Bluefire, seeing this, couldn’t help but laugh sourly.

The pentametal crown just hovered there. The red caltrop diamond hovered there as well.

“Swish!” The red caltrop diamond flew into the final, remaining central setting in the pentametal crown. It emitted countless rays of green light, causing even the sun to temporarily seem to grow dim by comparison.

“Rumble...” The world began to shake.

A blurry figure slowly began to appear, and a terrifying aura began to spread out. The pentametal crown immediately flew over towards the head of that blurred figure. The aura was so powerful that even Beirut and Bluefire couldn’t help but bow. Linley’s eyes lit up. He knew who the person in front of him was.

“The Overgod of Life!”